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WITH EDGED TOOLS.

CHAPTER XVII.

UNDERHAND.

The offender never pardons.

VICTOR DURNOVO lingered on at Loango. He elaborated and detailed to all interested, and to some whom it did not concern, many excuses for his delay in returning to his expedition, lying supine and attendant at Msala. It was by now an open secret on the coast that a great trading expedition was about to ascend the Ogowe river, with, it was whispered, a fortune awaiting it in the dim perspective of Central Africa.

Durnovo had already built up for himself a reputation. He was known as one of the foremost ivory traders on the coast—a man capable of standing against those enormous climatic risks before which his competitors surely fell sooner or later. His knowledge of the interior was unrivalled, his power over the natives a household word. Great things were therefore expected, and Durnovo found himself looked up to and respected in Loango with that friendly worship which is only to be acquired by the possession or prospective possession of vast wealth.

It is possible even in Loango to have a fling, but the carouser must be prepared to face, even in the midst of his revelry, the haunting thought that the exercise of the strictest economy in any other part of the world might be a preferable pastime.

During the three days following his arrival Victor Durnovo indulged, according to his lights, in the doubtful pleasure mentioned. He purchased at the best factory the best clothes obtain-

able; he lived like a fighting cock in the one so-called hotel—a house chiefly affected and supported by ship-captains. He spent freely of money that was not his, and imagined himself to be leading the life of a gentleman. He rode round on a hired horse to call on his friends, and on the afternoon of the sixth day he alighted from this quadruped at the gate of the Gordons' bungalow.

He knew that Maurice Gordon had left that morning on one of his frequent visits to a neighbouring sub-factory. Nevertheless, he expressed surprise when the servant gave him the information.

'Miss Gordon,' he said, tapping his boot with a riding-whip: 'is she in?'

'Yes, sir.'

A few minutes later Jocelyn came into the drawing-room, where he was waiting with a brazen face and a sinking heart. Somehow the very room had power to bring him down towards his own level. When he set eyes on Jocelyn, in her fair Saxon beauty, he regained *aplomb*.

She appeared to be rather glad to see him.

'I thought,' she said, 'that you had gone back to the expedition?'

And Victor Durnovo's boundless conceit substituted 'feared' for 'thought.'

'Not without coming to say good-bye,' he answered. 'It is not likely.'

Just to demonstrate how fully he felt at ease, he took a chair without waiting for an invitation, and sat tapping his boot with his whip, looking her furtively up and down all the while with an appraising eye.

'And when do you go?' she asked, with a subtle change in her tone which did not penetrate through his mental epidermis.

'I suppose in a few days now; but I'll let you know all right, never fear.'

Victor Durnovo stretched out his legs and made himself quite at home; but Jocelyn did not sit down. On the contrary, she remained standing, persistently and significantly.

'Maurice gone away?' he inquired.

'Yes.'

'And left you all alone,' in a tone of light badinage, which fell rather flat, on stony ground.

'I am accustomed to being left,' she answered gravely.

'I don't quite like it, you know.'

'You?'

She looked at him with a steady surprise which made him feel a trifle uncomfortable.

'Well, you know,' he was forced to explain, shuffling the while uneasily in his chair and dropping his whip, 'one naturally takes an interest in one's friends' welfare. You and Maurice are the best friends I have in Loango. I often speak to Maurice about it. It isn't as if there was an English garrison, or anything like that. I don't trust these niggers a bit.'

'Perhaps you do not understand them?' suggested she gently.

She moved away from him as far as she could get. Every moment increased her repugnance for his presence.

'I don't think Maurice would endorse that,' he said with a conceited laugh.

She winced at the familiar mention of her brother's name, which was probably intentional, and her old fear of this man came back with renewed force.

'I don't think,' he went on, 'that Maurice's estimation of my humble self is quite so low as yours.'

She gave a nervous little laugh.

'Maurice has always spoken of you with gratitude,' she said.

'To deaf ears, eh? Yes, he has reason to be grateful, though perhaps I ought not to say it. I have put him into several very good things on the coast, and it is in my power to get him into this new scheme. It is a big thing; he would be a rich man in no time.'

He rose from his seat and deliberately crossed the room to the sofa where she had sat down, where he reclined, with one arm stretched out along the back of it towards her. In his other hand he held his riding whip, with which he began to stroke the skirt of her dress, which reached along the floor almost to his feet.

'Would you like him to be in it?' he asked, with a meaning glance beneath his lashes. 'It is a pity to throw away a good chance; his position is not so very secure, you know.'

She gave a strange little hunted glance round the room. She was wedged into a corner, and could not rise without incurring the risk of his saying something she did not wish to hear. Then she leant forward and deliberately withdrew her dress from the touch of his whip, which was in its way a subtle caress.

'Is he throwing away the chance?' she asked.

'No, but you are.'

Then she rose from her seat, and, standing in the middle of the room, faced him with a sudden gleam in her eyes.

'I do not see what it has to do with me,' she said; 'I do not know anything about Maurice's business arrangements, and very little about his business friends.'

'Then let me tell you, Jocelyn—well, then, Miss Gordon if you prefer it—that you will know more about one of his business friends before you have finished with him. I've got Maurice more or less in my power now, and it rests with you——'

At this moment a shadow darkened the floor of the verandah, and an instant later Jack Meredith walked quietly in by the window.

'Enter, young man,' he said dramatically, 'by window—centre.'

'I am sorry,' he went on in a different tone to Jocelyn, 'to come in this unceremonious way, but the servant told me that you were in the verandah with Durnovo and——'

He turned towards the half-breed, pausing.

'And Durnovo is the man I want,' weighing on each word.

Durnovo's right hand was in his jacket pocket. Seeing Meredith's proffered salutation, he slowly withdrew it and shook hands.

The flash of hatred was still in his eyes when Jack Meredith turned upon him with aggravating courtesy. The pleasant, half-cynical glance wandered from Durnovo's dark face very deliberately down to his jacket pocket, where the stock of a revolver was imperfectly concealed.

'We were getting anxious about you,' he explained, 'seeing that you did not come back. Of course, we knew that you were capable of taking—care—of yourself.'

He was still looking innocently at the tell-tale jacket pocket, and Durnovo, following the direction of his glance, hastily thrust his hand into it.

'But one can never tell, with a treacherous climate like this, what a day may bring forth. However, I am glad to find you looking—so very fit.'

Victor Durnovo gave an awkward little laugh, extremely conscious of the factory clothes.

'Oh, yes; I'm all right,' he said. 'I was going to start this evening.'

The girl stood behind them, with a flush slowly fading from her face. There are some women who become suddenly beautiful—not by the glory of a beautiful thought, not by the exaltation of a lofty virtue, but by the mere, practical human flush. Jack Meredith, when he took his eyes from Durnovo's, glancing at Jocelyn, suddenly became aware of the presence of a beautiful woman.

The crisis was past; and if Jack knew it, so also did Jocelyn. She knew that the imperturbable gentlemanliness of the Englishman had conveyed to the more passionate West Indian the simple, downright fact that in a lady's drawing-room there was to be no raised voice, no itching fingers, no flash of fiery eyes.

'Yes,' he said, 'that will suit me splendidly. We will travel together.'

He turned to Jocelyn.

'I hear your brother is away?'

'Yes, for a few days. He has gone up the coast.'

Then there was a silence. They both paused, helping each other as if by pre-arrangement, and Victor Durnovo suddenly felt that he must go. He rose, and picked up the whip which he had dropped on the matting. There was no help for it—the united wills of these two people were too strong for him.

Jack Meredith passed out of the verandah with him, murmuring something about giving him a leg up. While they were walking round the house, Victor Durnovo made one of those hideous mistakes which one remembers all through life with a sudden rush of warm shame and self-contempt. The very thing that was uppermost in his mind to be avoided suddenly bubbled to his lips, almost, it would seem, in defiance of his own will.

'What about the small—the small-pox?' he asked.

'We have got it under,' replied Jack quietly. 'We had a very bad time for three days, but we got all the cases isolated and prevented it from spreading. Of course, we could do little or nothing to save them; they died.'

Durnovo had the air of a whipped dog. His mind was a blank. He simply had nothing to say; the humiliation of utter self-contempt was his.

'You need not be afraid to come back now,' Jack Meredith went on, with a strange refinement of cruelty.

And that was all he ever said about it.

'Will it be convenient for you to meet me on the beach at

four o'clock this afternoon?' he asked, when Durnovo was in the saddle.

'Yes.'

'All right, four o'clock.'

He turned and deliberately went back to the bungalow.

There are some friendships where the intercourse is only the seed which absence duly germinates. Jocelyn Gordon and Jack had parted as acquaintances; they met as friends. There is no explaining these things, for there is no gauging the depths of the human mind. There is no getting down to the little bond that lies at the bottom of the well—the bond of sympathy. There is no knowing what it is that prompts us to say, 'This man, or this woman, of all the millions, shall be my friend.'

'I am sorry,' he said, 'that he should have had a chance of causing you uneasiness again.'

Jocelyn remembered that all her life. She remembers still—and Africa has slipped away from her existence for ever. It is one of the mental photographs of her memory, standing out clear and strong amidst a host of minor recollections.

CHAPTER XVIII.

A REQUEST.

It surely was my profit had I known,
It would have been my pleasure had I seen.

'WHY did he come back?'

Jocelyn had risen as if to intimate that, if he cared to do so, they would sit in the verandah.

'Why did Mr. Durnovo come back?' she repeated; for Jack did not seem to have heard the question. He was drawing forward a cane chair with the leisurely *débonnair* grace that was his, and, before replying, he considered for a moment.

'To get quinine,' he answered.

Without looking at her, he seemed to divine that he had made a mistake. He seemed to know that she had flushed suddenly to the roots of her hair, with a distressed look in her eyes. The reason was too trivial. She could only draw one conclusion.

'No,' he continued; 'to tell you the truth, I think his nerve gave way a little. His health is undermined by this climate. He

has been too long in Africa. We have had a bad time at Msala. We have had small-pox in the camp. Osgard and I have been doing doughty deeds. I feel convinced that, if we applied to some Society, we should get something or other—a testimonial or a monument—also Joseph.’

‘I like Joseph,’ she said in a low tone.

‘So do I. If circumstances had been different—if Joseph had not been my domestic servant—I should have liked him for a friend.’

He was looking straight in front of him with a singular fixity. It is possible that he was conscious of the sidelong scrutiny which he was undergoing.

‘And you—you have been all right?’ she said lightly.

‘Oh, yes,’ with a laugh. ‘I have not brought the infection down to Loango; you need not be afraid of that.’

For a moment she looked as if she were going to explain that she was not ‘afraid of that.’ Then she changed her mind and let it pass, as he seemed to believe.

‘Joseph constructed a disinfecting room with a wood-smoke fire, or something of that description, and he has been disinfecting everything, down to Osgard’s pipes.’

She gave a little laugh, which stopped suddenly.

‘Was it very bad?’ she asked.

‘Oh, no. We took it in time, you see. We had eleven deaths. And now we are all right. We are only waiting for Durnovo to join, and then we shall make a start. Of course, somebody else could have come down for the quinine.’

‘Yes.’

He glanced at her beneath his lashes before going on.

‘But, as Durnovo’s nerves were a little shaken, it—was just as well, don’t you know, to get him out of it all.’

‘I suppose he got himself out of it all?’ she said quietly.

‘Well—to a certain extent. With our approval, you understand.’

Men have an *esprit de sexe* as well as women. They like to hustle the cowards through with the crowd, unobserved.

‘It is a strange thing,’ said Jocelyn, with a woman’s scorn of the man who fears those things of which she herself has no sort of dread, ‘a very strange thing that Mr. Durnovo said nothing about it down here. It is not known in Loango that you had small-pox in the camp.’

'Well, you see, when he left we were not quite sure about it.'

'I imagine Mr. Durnovo knows all about small-pox. We all do on this coast. He could hardly help recognising it in its earliest stage.'

She turned on him with a smile which he remembered afterwards. At the moment he felt rather abashed, as if he had been caught in a very maze of untruths. He did not meet her eyes. It was a matter of pride with him that he was equal to any social emergency that might arise. He had always deemed himself capable of withholding from the whole questioning world anything that he might wish to withhold. But afterwards—later in his life—he remembered that look in Jocelyn Gordon's face.

'Altogether,' she said, with a peculiar little contented laugh, 'I think you cannot keep it up any longer. He ran away from you and left you to fight against it alone. All the same, it was—nice—of you to try and screen him. Very nice, but I do not think that I could have done it myself. I suppose it was—noble—and women cannot be noble.'

'No, it was only expedient. The best way to take the world is to wring it dry—not to try and convert it and make it better, but to turn its vices to account. That method has the double advantage of serving one's purpose at the time, and standing as a warning later. The best way to cure vice is to turn it ruthlessly to one's own account. That is what we are doing with Durnovo. His little idiosyncrasies will turn in witness against him later on.'

She shook her head in disbelief.

'Your practice and your theory do not agree,' she said.

There was a little pause; then she turned to him gravely.

'Have you been vaccinated?' she asked.

'In the days of my baptism, wherein I was made——'

'No doubt,' she interrupted impatiently, 'but since? Have you had it done lately?'

'Just before I came away from England. My tailor urged it so strongly. He said that he had made outfits for many gents going to Africa, and they had all made their wills and been vaccinated. For reasons which are too painful to dwell upon in these pages I could not make a will, so I was enthusiastically vaccinated.'

'And have you all the medicines you will require? Did you really want that quinine?'

There was a practical common-sense anxiety in the way she asked these questions which made him answer gravely.

'All, thanks. We did not really want the quinine, but we can do with it. Osgard is our doctor; he is really very good. He looks it all up in a book, puts all the negative symptoms on one side, and the positive on the other—adds them all up, then deducts the smaller from the larger, and treats what is left of the patient accordingly.'

She laughed more with the view of pleasing him than from a real sense of the ludicrous.

'I do not believe,' she said, 'that you know the risks you are running into. Even in the short time that Maurice and I have been here we have learnt to treat the climate of Western Africa with a proper respect. We have known so many people who have—succumbed.'

'Yes, but I do not mean to do that. In a way, Durnovo's—what shall we call it?—lack of nerve is a great safeguard. He will not run into any danger.'

'No, but he might run you into it.'

'Not a second time, Miss Gordon. Not if we know it. Osgard mentioned a desire to wring Durnovo's neck. I am afraid he will do it one of these days.'

'The mistake that most people make,' the girl went on more lightly, 'is a want of care. You cannot be too careful, you know, in Africa.'

'I am careful; I have reason to be.'

She was looking at him steadily, her blue eyes searching his.

'Yes?' she said slowly, and there were a thousand questions in the word.

'It would be very foolish of me to be otherwise,' he said. 'I am engaged to be married, and I came out here to make the wherewithal. This expedition is an expedition to seek the wherewithal.'

'Yes,' she said, 'and therefore you must be more careful than anyone else. Because, you see, your life is something which does not belong to you, but with which you are trusted. I mean, if there is anything dangerous to be done, let someone else do it. What is she like? What is her name?'

'Her name is Millicent—Millicent Chyne.'

'And—what is she like?'

He leant back, and, interlocking his fingers, stretched his arms

out with the palms of his hands outward—a habit of his when asked a question needing consideration.

‘She is of medium height; her hair is brown. Her worst enemy admits, I believe, that she is pretty. Of course, I am convinced of it.’

‘Of course,’ replied Jocelyn steadily. ‘That is as it should be. And I have no doubt that you and her worst enemy are both quite right.’

He nodded cheerfully, indicating a great faith in his own judgment on the matter under discussion.

‘I am afraid,’ he said, ‘that I have not a photograph. That would be the correct thing, would it not? I ought to have one always with me in a locket round my neck, or somewhere. A curiously-wrought locket is the correct thing, I believe. People in books usually carry something of that description—and it is always curiously wrought. I don’t know where they buy them.’

‘I think they are usually inherited,’ suggested Jocelyn.

‘I suppose they are,’ he went on in the same semi-serious tone. ‘And then I ought to have it always ready to clasp in my dying hand, where Joseph would find it and wipe away a furtive tear as he buried me. It is a pity. I am afraid I inherited nothing from my ancestors except a very practical mind.’

‘I should have liked very much to see a photograph of Miss Chyne,’ said Jocelyn, who had, apparently, not been listening.

‘I hope some day you will see herself, at home in England. For you have no abiding city here.’

‘Only a few more years now. Has she—are her parents living?’

‘No, they are both dead. Indian people they were. Indian people have a tragic way of dying young. Millicent lives with her aunt, Lady Cantourne. And Lady Cantourne ought to have married my respected father.’

‘Why did she not do so?’

He shrugged his shoulders—paused—sat up and flicked a large moth off the arm of his chair. Then,

‘Goodness only knows,’ he said. ‘Goodness, and themselves. I suppose they found it out too late. That is one of the little risks of life.’

She answered nothing.

‘Do you think,’ he went on, ‘that there will be a special Hell

in the Hereafter for parents who have sacrificed their children's lives to their own ambition? I hope there will be.'

'I have never given the matter the consideration it deserves,' she answered. 'Was that the reason? Is Lady Cantourne a more important person than Lady Meredith?'

'Yes.'

She gave a little nod of comprehension as if he had raised a curtain for her to see into his life—into the far perspective of it reaching back into the dim distance of fifty years before. For our lives do reach back into the lives of our fathers and grandfathers; the beginnings made there come down into our daily existence, shaping our thought and action. That which stood between Sir John Meredith and his son was not so much the present personality of Millicent Chyne as the past shadows of a disappointed life, an unloved wife and an unsympathetic mother. And these things Jocelyn Gordon knew while she sat, gazing with thoughtful eyes, wherein something lived and burned of which she was almost ignorant—gazing through the tendrils of the creeping flowers that hung around them.

At last Jack Meredith rose briskly, watch in hand, and Jocelyn came back to things of earth with a quick gasping sigh which took her by surprise.

'Miss Gordon, will you do something for me?'

'With pleasure.'

He tore a leaf from his pocket-book, and, going to the table, he wrote on the paper with a pencil pendent at his watch-chain.

'The last few days,' he explained while he wrote, 'have awakened me to the lamentable fact that human life is rather an uncertain affair.'

He came towards her, holding out the paper.

'If you hear—if anything happens to me, would you be so kind as to write to Millicent and tell her of it? That is the address.'

She took the paper, and read the address with a dull sort of interest.

'Yes,' she said. 'Yes, if you like. But—nothing must happen to you.'

There was a slight unsteadiness in her voice which made her stop suddenly. She did not fold the paper, but continued to read the address.

'No,' he said, 'nothing will. But would you not despise a

man who could not screw up his courage to face the possibility ?'

He wondered what she was thinking about, for she did not seem to hear him.

A clock in the drawing-room behind them struck the half-hour, and the sound seemed to recall her to the present.

'Are you going now ?' she asked.

'Yes,' he answered, vaguely puzzled. 'Yes, I must go now.'

She rose, and for a moment he held her hand. He was distinctly conscious of something left unsaid—of many things. He even paused on the edge of the verandah, trying to think what it was that he had to say. Then he pushed aside the hanging flowers and passed out.

'Good-bye !' he said over his shoulder.

Her lips moved, but he heard no sound. She turned with a white drawn face and sat down again. The paper was still in her hand. She consulted it again, reading in a whisper :

'Millicent Chyne—Millicent !'

She turned the paper over and studied the back of it—almost as if she was trying to find what there was behind that name.

Through the trees there rose and fell the music of the distant surf. Somewhere near at hand a water-wheel, slowly irrigating the rice fields, creaked and groaned after the manner of water-wheels all over Africa. In all there was that subtle sense of unreality—that utter lack of permanency which touches the heart of the white exile in tropic lands, and lets life slip away without allowing the reality of it to be felt.

The girl sat there with the name before her—written on the little slip of paper—the only memento he had left her.

CHAPTER XIX.

IVORY.

'Tis one thing to be tempted, Escalus,
Another thing to fall.

ONE of the peculiarities of Africa yet to be explained is the almost supernatural rapidity with which rumour travels. Across the whole breadth of this darkest continent a mere bit of gossip has made its way in a month. A man may divulge a secret, say, at

St. Paul de Loanda, take ship to Zanzibar, and there his own secret will be told to him.

Rumour met Maurice Gordon almost at the outset of his journey northward.

'Small-pox is raging on the Ogowe river,' they told him. 'The English expedition is stricken down with it. The three leaders are dead.'

Maurice Gordon had not lived four years on the West African coast in vain. He took this for what it was worth. But if he had acquired scepticism he had lost his nerve. He put about and sailed back to Loango.

'I wonder,' he muttered as he walked up from the beach to his office that same afternoon, 'I wonder if Durnovo is among them?'

And he was conscious of a ray of hope in his mind. He was a kind-hearted man, in his way, this Maurice Gordon of Loango; but he could not disguise from himself the simple fact that the death of Victor Durnovo would be a distinct convenience and a most desirable relief. Even the best of us—that is to say, the present writer and his reader—have these inconvenient little feelings. There are people who have done us no particular injury, to whom we wish no particular harm, but we feel that it would be very expedient and considerate of them to die.

Thinking these thoughts, Maurice Gordon arrived at the factory and went straight to his own office, where he found the object of them—Victor Durnovo—sitting in consumption of the office sherry.

Gordon saw at once that the rumour was true. There was a hunted, unwholesome look in Durnovo's eyes. He looked shaken, and failed to convey a suggestion of personal dignity.

'Hulloa!' exclaimed the proprietor of the decanter. 'You look a bit chippy. I've heard you've got small-pox up at Msala.'

'So have I. I've just heard it from Meredith.'

'Just heard it—is Meredith down here too?'

'Yes, and the fool wants to go back to-night. I have to meet him on the beach at four o'clock.'

Maurice Gordon sat down, poured out for himself a glass of sherry, and drank it thoughtfully.

'Do you know, Durnovo,' he said emphatically, 'I have my doubts about Meredith being a fool.'

'Indeed!' with a derisive laugh.

'Yes.'

Maurice Gordon looked over his shoulder to see that the door was shut.

'You'll have to be very careful,' he said. 'The least slip might let it all out. Meredith has a quiet way of looking at one which disquiets me. He might find out.'

'Not he,' replied Durnovo confidently, 'especially if we succeed; and we shall succeed—by God we shall!'

Maurice Gordon made a little movement of the shoulders, as indicating a certain uneasiness, but he said nothing.

There was a pause of considerable duration, at the end of which Durnovo produced a paper from his pocket and threw it down.

'That's good business,' he said.

'Two thousand tusks,' murmured Maurice Gordon. 'Yes, that's good. Through Akmed, I suppose?'

'Yes. We can outdo these Arabs at their own trade.'

An evil smile lighted up Durnovo's sallow face. When he smiled, his drooping, curtain-like moustache projected in a way that made keen observers of the human face wonder what his mouth was like.

Gordon, who had been handling the paper with the tips of his fingers, as if it were something unclean, threw it down on the table again.

'Ye—es,' he said slowly; 'but it does not seem to dirty black hands as it does white. They know no better.'

'Lord!' ejaculated Durnovo. 'Don't let us begin the old arguments all over again. I thought we settled that the trade was there; we couldn't prevent it, and therefore the best thing is to make hay while the sun shines, and then clear out of the country.'

'But suppose Meredith finds out?' reiterated Maurice Gordon, with the lamentable hesitation that precedes loss.

'If Meredith finds out, it will be the worse for him.'

A certain concentration of tone aroused Maurice Gordon's attention, and he glanced uneasily at his companion.

'No one knows what goes on in the heart of Africa,' said Durnovo darkly. 'But we will not trouble about that; Meredith won't find out.'

'Where is he now?'

'With your sister, at the bungalow. A lady's man—that is what he is.'

Victor Durnovo was smarting under a sense of injury which was annoyingly indefinite. It was true that Jack Meredith had come at a very unpropitious moment; but it was equally clear that the intrusion could only have been the result of accident. It was really a case of the third person who is no company, with aggravated symptoms. Durnovo had vaguely felt in the presence of either a subtle possibility of sympathy between Jocelyn Gordon and Jack Meredith. When he saw them together, for only a few minutes as it happened, the sympathy rose up and buffeted him in the face, and he hated Jack Meredith for it. He hated him for a certain reposeful sense of capability which he had at first set down as conceit, and later on had learnt to value as something innate in blood and education which was not conceit. He hated him because his gentlemanliness was so obvious that it showed up the flaws in other men, as the masterpiece upon the wall shows up the weaknesses of the surrounding pictures. But most of all he hated him because Jocelyn Gordon seemed to have something in common with the son of Sir John Meredith—a world above the head of even the most successful trader on the coast—a world in which he, Victor Durnovo, could never live and move at ease.

Beyond this, Victor Durnovo cherished the hatred of the Found Out. He felt instinctively that behind the courteous demeanour of Jack Meredith there was an opinion—a cool, unbiassed criticism—of himself, which Meredith had no intention of divulging.

On hearing that Jack was at the bungalow with Jocelyn, Maurice Gordon glanced at the clock and wondered how he could get away from his present visitor. The atmosphere of Jack Meredith's presence was preferable to that diffused by Victor Durnovo. There was a feeling of personal safety and dignity in the very sound of his voice which set a weak and easily-led man upon his feet.

But Victor Durnovo had something to say to Gordon which circumstances had brought to a crisis.

'Look here,' he said, leaning forward and throwing away the cigarette he had been smoking. 'This Simiacine scheme is going to be the biggest thing that has ever been run on this coast.'

'Yes,' said Gordon, with the indifference that comes from non-participation.

'And I'm the only business man in it,' significantly.

Gordon nodded his head, awaiting further developments.

‘Which means that I could work another man into it. I might find out that we could not get on without him.’

The black eyes seemed to probe the good-natured, sensual face of Maurice Gordon, so keen, so searching was their glance.

‘And I would be willing to do it—to make that man’s fortune—provided—that he was—my brother-in-law.’

‘What the devil do you mean?’ asked Gordon, setting down the glass that was half raised to his lips.

‘I mean that I want to marry—Jocelyn.’

And the modern school of realistic, mawkishly foul novelists, who hold that Love excuseth all, would have taken delight in the passionate rendering of the girl’s name.

‘Want to marry Jocelyn, do you?’ answered Maurice, with a derisive little laugh. On the first impulse of the moment he gave no thought to himself or his own interests, and spoke with undisguised contempt. He might have been speaking to a beggar on the roadside.

Durnovo’s eyes flashed dangerously, and his tobacco-stained teeth clenched for a moment over his lower lip.

‘That is my desire—and intention.’

‘Look here, Durnovo!’ exclaimed Gordon. ‘Don’t be a fool! Can’t you see that it is quite out of the question?’

He attempted weakly to dismiss the matter by leaning forward on his writing-table, taking up his pen, and busying himself with a number of papers.

Victor Durnovo rose from his chair so hastily that in a flash Maurice Gordon’s hand was in the top right-hand drawer of his writing-table. The good-natured blue eyes suddenly became fixed and steady. But Durnovo seemed to make an effort over himself, and walked to the window, where he drew aside the woven-grass blind and looked out into the glaring sunlight. Still standing there, he turned and spoke in a low, concentrated voice:

‘No,’ he said, ‘I can’t see that it is out of the question. On the contrary, it seems only natural that she should marry the man who is her brother’s partner in many a little—speculation.’

Maurice Gordon, sitting there, staring hopelessly into the half-breed’s yellow face, saw it all. He went back in a flash of recollection to many passing details which had been unnoted at the time—details which now fitted into each other like the links of a chain—and that chain was around him. He leapt forward in a momentary opening of the future, and saw himself ruined, disgraced, held up

to the execration of the whole civilised world. He was utterly in this man's power—bound hand and foot. He could not say him no. And least of all could he say no to this demand, which had roused all the latent chivalry, gentlemanliness, brotherly love that was in him. Maurice Gordon knew that Victor Durnovo possessed knowledge which Jocelyn would consider cheap at the price of her person.

There was one way out of it. His hand was still on the handle of the top right-hand drawer. He was a dead shot. His finger was within two inches of the stock of a revolver. One bullet for Victor Durnovo, another for himself. Then the old training of his school-days—the training that makes an upright, honest gentleman—asserted itself, and he saw the cowardice of it. There was time enough for that later, when the crisis came. In the meantime, if the worst came to the worst, he could fight to the end.

'I don't think,' said Durnovo, who seemed to be following Gordon's thoughts, 'that the idea will be so repellent to your sister as you seem to think.'

And a sudden ray of hope shot athwart the future into which his listener was staring. It might be so. One can never tell with women. Maurice Gordon had had considerable experience of the world, and, after all, he was only building up hope upon precedent. He knew, as well as you or I, that women will dance and flirt with—even marry—men who are not gentlemen. Not only for the moment, but as a permanency, something seems to kill their perception of a fact which is patent to every educated man in the room; and one never knows what it is. One can only surmise that it is that thirst for admiration which does more harm in the world than the thirst for alcoholic stimulant which we fight by societies and guilds, oaths, and little bits of ribbon.

'The idea never entered my head,' said Gordon.

'It has never been out of mine,' replied Durnovo, with a little harsh laugh which was almost pathetic.

'I don't want you to do anything now,' he went on more gently. It was wonderful how well he knew Maurice Gordon. The suggested delay appealed to one side of his nature, the softened tone to another. 'There is time enough. When I come back I will speak of it again.'

'You have not spoken to her?'

'No, I have not spoken to her.'

Maurice Gordon shook his head.

'She is a queer girl,' he said, trying to conceal the hope that was in his voice. 'She is cleverer than me, you know, and all that. My influence is very small, and would scarcely be considered.'

'But your interests would,' suggested Durnovo. 'Your sister is very fond of you, and—I think I have one or two arguments to put forward which she would recognise as uncommonly strong.'

The colour which had been returning slowly to Maurice Gordon's face now faded away again. His lips were dry and shrivelled as if he had passed through a sirocco.

'Mind,' continued Durnovo reassuringly, 'I don't say I would use them unless I suspected that you were acting in opposition to my wishes.'

Gordon said nothing. His heart was throbbing uncomfortably—it seemed to be in his throat.

'I would not bring forward those arguments except as a last resource,' went on Victor Durnovo with the deliberate cruelty of a tyrant. 'I would first point out the advantages: a fourth share in the Simiacine scheme would make you a rich man—above suspicion—independent of the gossip of the market-place.'

Maurice Gordon winced visibly, and his eyes wavered as if he were about to give way to panic.

'You could retire and go home to England—to a cooler climate. This country might get too hot for your constitution—see?'

Durnovo came back into the centre of the room and stood by the writing-table. His attitude was that of a man holding a whip over a cowering dog.

He took up his hat and riding-whip with a satisfied little laugh, as if the dog had cringingly done his bidding.

'Besides,' he said, with a certain defiance of manner, 'I may succeed without any of that—eh?'

'Yes,' Gordon was obliged to admit with a gulp, as if he were swallowing his pride, and he knew that in saying the word he was degrading his sister—throwing her at this man's feet as the price of his own honour.

With a half-contemptuous nod Victor Durnovo turned and went away to keep his appointment with Meredith.

CHAPTER XX.

BROUGHT TO THE SCRATCH.

Take heed of still waters; the quick pass away.

GUY OSCARD was sitting on the natural terrace in front of Dur-novo's house at Msala, and Marie attended to his simple wants with that patient dignity which suggested the recollection of better times, and appealed strongly to the manhood of her fellow-servant Joseph and her whilom master.

Oscard was not good at the enunciation of those small amenities which are supposed to soothe the feelings of the temporarily debased. He vaguely felt that this woman was not accustomed to menial service, but he knew that any suggestion of sympathy was more than he could compass. So he merely spoke to her more gently than to the men, and perhaps she understood, despite her chocolate-coloured skin.

They had inaugurated a strange unequal friendship during the three days that Oscard had been left alone at Msala. Joseph had been promoted to the command of a certain number of the porters, and his domestic duties were laid aside. Thus Marie was called upon to attend to Guy Oscard's daily wants.

'I think I'll take coffee,' he was saying to her in reply to a question. 'Yes—coffee, please, Marie.'

He was smoking one of his big wooden pipes, staring straight in front of him with a placidity natural to his bulk.

The woman turned away with a little smile. She liked this big man with his halting tongue and quiet ways. She liked his awkward attempts to conciliate the coquette Xantippe—to extract a smile from the grave Nestorius, and she liked his manner towards herself. She liked the poised pipe and the jerky voice as he said, 'Yes—coffee, please, Marie.'

Women do like these things—they seem to understand them and to attach some strange, subtle importance of their own to them. For which power some of us who have not the knack of turning a pretty phrase or throwing off an appropriate pleasantry may well be thankful.

Presently she returned, bringing the coffee on a rough tray, also a box of matches and Oscard's tobacco pouch. Noting this

gratuitous attention to his comfort, he looked up with a little laugh.

‘Er—thank you,’ he said. ‘Very kind.’

He did not put his pipe back to his lips—keenly alive to the fact that the exigency of the moment demanded a little polite exchange of commonplace.

‘Children gone to bed?’ he asked anxiously.

She paused in her slow, deft arrangement of the little table.

‘Yes,’ she answered quietly.

He nodded as if the news were eminently satisfactory. ‘Nestorius,’ he said, adhering to Meredith’s pleasantry, ‘is the jolliest little chap I have met for a long time.’

‘Yes,’ she answered softly. ‘Yes—but listen!’

He raised his head, listening as she did—both looking down the river into the gathering darkness.

‘I hear the sound of paddles,’ she said. ‘And you?’

‘Not yet. My ears are not so sharp as yours.’

‘I am accustomed to it,’ the woman said, with some emotion in her voice which he did not understand then. ‘I am always listening.’

Oscard seemed to be struck with this description of herself. It was so very apt—so comprehensive. The woman’s attitude before the world was the attitude of the listener for some distant sound.

She poured out his coffee, setting the cup at his elbow. ‘Now you will hear,’ she said, standing upright with that untrammelled dignity of carriage which is found wherever African blood is in the veins. ‘They have just come round Broken Tree Bend. There are two boats.’

He listened, and after a moment heard the regular glug-glug of the paddles stealing over the waters of the still tropic river, covering a wonderful distance.

‘Yes,’ he said, ‘I hear. Mr. Meredith said he would be back to-night.’

She gave a strange little low laugh—almost the laugh of a happy woman.

‘He is like that, Mr. Meredith,’ she said; ‘what he says he does’—in the pretty English of one who has learnt Spanish first.

‘Yes, Marie—he is like that.’

She turned, in her strangely subdued way, and went into the house to prepare some supper for the new comers.

It was not long before the sound of the paddles was quite dis-

tinct, and then—probably on turning a corner of the river and coming in sight of the lights of Msala—Jack Meredith's cheery shout came floating through the night. Osgard took his pipe from his lips and sent back an answer that echoed against the trees across the river. He walked down to the water's edge, where he was presently joined by Joseph with a lantern.

The two boats came on to the sloping shore with a grating sound, and by the light of the waving lantern Osgard saw Durnovo and Jack land from the same boat.

The three men walked up to the house together. Marie was at the door, and bowed her head gravely in answer to Jack's salutation. Durnovo nodded curtly and said nothing.

In the sitting room, by the light of the paraffin lamp, the two Englishmen exchanged a long questioning glance, quite different from the quick interrogation of a woman's eyes. There was a smile on Jack Meredith's face.

'All ready to start to-morrow?' he inquired.

'Yes,' replied Osgard.

And that was all they could say. Durnovo never left them alone together that night. He watched their faces with keen suspicious eyes. Behind the moustache his lips were pursed up in restless anxiety. But he saw nothing—learnt nothing. These two men were inscrutable.

At eleven o'clock the next morning the Simiacine seekers left their first unhappy camp at Msala. They had tasted of misfortune at the very beginning, but after the first reverse they returned to their work with that dogged determination which is a better spirit than the wild enthusiasm of departure, where friends shout and flags wave, and an artificial hopefulness throws in its jarring note.

They had left behind them with the artifice of civilisation that subtle handicap of a woman's presence; and the little flotilla of canoes that set sail from the terrace at Msala one morning in November, not so many years ago, was essentially masculine in its bearing. The four white men—quiet, self-contained, and intrepid—seemed to work together with a perfect unity, a oneness of thought and action which really lay in the brain of one of them. No man can define a true leader; for one is too autocratic and the next too easily led; one is too quick-tempered, another too reserved. It would almost seem that the ideal leader is that man who knows how to extract from the brains of his subordinates all

that is best and strongest therein—who knows how to suppress his own individuality, and merge it for the time being into that of his fellow-worker—whose influence is from within, and not from without.

The most successful Presidents of Republics have been those who are or pretend to be nonentities, content to be mere pegs, standing still and lifeless, for things to be hung upon. Jack Meredith was, or pretended to be, this. He never assumed the airs of a leader. He never was a leader. He merely smoothed things over, suggested here, laughed there, and seemed to stand by, indifferent all the while.

In less than a week they left the river, hauling their canoes up on the bank, and hiding them in the tangle of the virgin under-wood. A depôt of provisions, likewise hidden, was duly made, and the long, weary march began.

The daily routine of this need not be followed, for there were weeks of long monotony varied only by a new difficulty, a fresh danger, or a deplorable accident. Twice the whole company had to lay aside the baggage and assume arms, when Guy Osgard proved himself to be a cool and daring leader. Not twice, but two hundred times, the ring of Joseph's unerring rifle sent some naked savage crawling into the brake to die, with a sudden wonder in his half-awakened brain. They could not afford to be merciful; their only safeguard was to pass through this country, leaving a track of blood and fire and dread behind them.

This, however, is no record of travel in Central Africa. There are many such to be had at any circulating library, written by abler and more fantastic pens. Some of us who have wandered in the darkest continent have looked in vain for things seen by former travellers—things which, as the saying is, are neither here nor there. Indeed, there is not much to see in a vast, boundless forest with little life and no variety—nothing but a deadly monotony of twilight tangle. There is nothing new under the sun—even immediately under it in Central Africa. The only novelty is the human heart—Central Man. That is never stale, and there are depths still unexplored, heights still unattained, warm rivers of love, cold streams of hatred, and vast plains where strange motives grow. These are our business.

We have not to deal so much with the finding of the Simiacine as with the finders, and of these the chief at this time was Jack Meredith. It seemed quite natural that one duty after another

should devolve upon him, and he invariably had time to do them all, and leisure to comment pleasantly upon it. But his chief care was Victor Durnovo.

As soon as they entered the forest two hundred miles above Msala, the half-breed was a changed man. The strange restlessness asserted itself again—the man was nervous, eager, sincere. His whole being was given up to this search; his whole heart and soul were enveloped in it. At first he worked steadily, like a mariner threading his way through known waters; but gradually his composure left him, and he became incapable of doing other work.

Jack Meredith was at his side always. By day he walked near him as he piloted the column through the trackless forest. At night he slept in the same tent, stretched across the doorway. Despite the enormous fatigue, he slept the light sleep of the townsman, and often he was awakened by Durnovo talking aloud, groaning, tossing on his narrow bed.

When they had been on the march for two months—piloted with marvellous instinct by Durnovo—Meredith made one or two changes in the organisation. The caravan naturally moved slowly, owing to the enormous amount of baggage to be carried, and this delay seemed to irritate Victor Durnovo to such an extent that at last it was obvious that the man would go mad unless this enormous tension could be relieved.

‘For God’s sake,’ he would shout, ‘hurry those men on! We haven’t done ten miles to-day. Another man down—damn him!’

And more than once he had to be dragged forcibly away from the fallen porter, whom he battered with both fists. Had he had his will he would have allowed no time for meals, and only a few hours’ halt for rest. Guy Osgard did not understand it. His denser nerves were incapable of comprehending the state of irritation and unreasoning restlessness into which the climate and excitement had brought Durnovo. But Meredith, in his finer organisation, understood the case better. He it was who soothingly explained the necessity for giving the men a longer rest. He alone could persuade Durnovo to lie down at night and cease his perpetual calculations. The man’s hands were so unsteady that he could hardly take the sights necessary to determine their position in this sea-like waste. And to Jack alone did Victor Durnovo ever approach the precincts of mutual confidence.

‘I can’t help it, Meredith,’ he said one day, with a scared look,

after a particularly violent outburst of temper. 'I don't know what it is. I sometimes think I'm going mad.'

And soon after that the change was made.

An advance column, commanded by Meredith and Durnovo, was selected to push on to the Plateau, while Osgard and Joseph followed more leisurely with the baggage and the slower travellers.

One of the strangest journeys in the vast unwritten history of commercial advance was that made by the five men from the camp of the main expedition across the lower slopes of a mountain range—unmarked on any map, unnamed by any geographer—to the mysterious Simiacine Plateau. It almost seemed as if the wild, bloodshot eyes of their guide could pierce the density of the forest where Nature had held unchecked, untrimmed sway for countless generations. Victor Durnovo noted a thousand indications unseen by his four companions. The journey no longer partook of the nature of a carefully calculated progress across a country untrodden by a white man's foot; it was a wild rush in a straight line through unbroken forest fastness, guided by an instinct that was stronger than knowledge. And the only Englishman in the party—Jack Meredith—had to choose between madness and rest. He knew enough of the human brain to be convinced that the only possible relief to this tension was success.

Victor Durnovo would never know rest now until he reached the spot where the Simiacine should be. If the trees were there, growing, as he said, in solitary state and order, strangely suggestive of human handiwork, then Victor Durnovo was saved. If no such spot was found, madness and death could only follow.

To save his companion's reason, Meredith more than once drugged his food; but when the land began to rise beneath their feet in tentative billow-like inequalities—the deposit of a glacial age—Durnovo refused to stop for the preparation of food. Eating dry biscuits and stringy tinned meat as they went along, the four men—three blacks and one white—followed in the footsteps of their mad pilot.

'We're getting to the mountains—we're getting to the mountains! We shall be there to-night! Think of that, Meredith—to-night!' he kept repeating with a sickening monotony. And all the while he stumbled on. The perspiration ran down his face in one continuous stream; at times he paused to wipe it from his eyes with the back of his hands, and as these were torn and bleeding there were smears of blood across his cheeks.

The night fell; the moon rose, red and glorious, and the beasts of this untrodden forest paused in their search for meat to watch with wondering, fearless eyes that strange, unknown animal—man.

It was Durnovo who, climbing wildly, first saw the break in the trees ahead. He gave a muffled cry of delight, and in a few minutes they were all rushing, like men possessed, up a bare slope of broken shale.

Durnovo reached the summit first. A faint, pleasant odour was wafted into their faces. They stood on the edge of a vast table-land melting away in the yellow moonlight. Studded all over, like sheep in a meadow, were a number of little bushes, and no other vegetation.

Victor Durnovo stooped over one of these. He buried his face among the leaves of it, and suddenly he toppled over.

‘Yes,’ he cried as he fell, ‘it’s Simiacine!’

And he turned over with a groan of satisfaction, and lay like a dead man.

(To be continued.)

*THE SUBALTERN IN INDIA A HUNDRED
YEARS AGO.*

THE British subaltern of to-day has a proverbially hard lot when he attempts the herculean task of 'living on his pay.' Happy those whose paternal coffers are well filled, and who possess the 'Open Sesame' to their treasures!

India is the land of promise to the noble-hearted youths who aspire to the achievement of making both ends meet. Thither their footsteps turn, and there, having gone forth from their British regiments and enrolled themselves under the banner of the Staff Corps, they may find alleviations to their lot in the company of the sporting, pleasure-loving members of Anglo-Indian society.

But the subaltern has a time of danger to pass through while he is being 'seasoned,' not only to the climate, but to the social atmosphere of his new surroundings. In the days of his griffinhood—those first perilous twelve months—how many rocks ahead there are on which his bark may go down. With prudence, it is true, he may steer through open channels and escape shipwreck, but few will keep clear of the toils of some 'trusty' native bearer. The bearer speaks the language of which the newcomer knows nothing; the bearer knows the manners and customs of the country of which his master is profoundly ignorant; the bearer can arrange journeys and make *bandobasts* to perfection, where the griffin, after toiling and moiling, and getting his first taste of fever in struggling against the passive resistance of native officials, has to confess himself vanquished, and make up for his presumptuous rashness by unlimited *backsheesh*.

The 'trusty' attendant gradually, and by the most infinitesimal advances, gets more and more into his own hands, and makes himself indispensable to his employer, until at last he attains the object he has had in view all along, viz., to be paymaster and director-general of his confiding sahib.

Who that is not versed in the ways of Anglo-Indian life would imagine, in looking at our fair-faced, ingenuous subaltern and his cringing, servile Eastern attendant, observing the fawning respect

of the one, and the sharp, imperious orders and irascible speech of the other, that it is the Asiatic who is master of the situation, and who quietly, plausibly, and convincingly represents to his superior the necessities of the moment? Care soon begins to dog the footsteps of the too-confiding subaltern, and only he and his bearer can trace the subtle windings of the spectre's advance. It would, perhaps, be truer to say that only the bearer knows the intricacies and can follow the slow weaving of the web that ere long binds his master hand and foot. The subaltern's British manhood is impotent to fight against the wiles of his Eastern brother. Pay-day is a time of untold horrors, for the month's pay is swallowed up in the yawning gulf of unmet claims of which the trusty bearer has such an alarmingly accurate knowledge.

Happy those whose bearers are not of the 'trusty' order, and who have consequently struggled by themselves with the maddening problem of settling their little bills.

Should the griffin thus stand alone in the days of his extremity, the smallness of his pay will not prevent his being light-hearted, and there will be no extortionate *bunniyah*, no oily, respectful, but relentless bearer to haunt his dreams, and drive peace from him. Then he can enjoy to the full the pigsticking and the polo, the Gymkhana and the dance, and may bask in the light of blue eyes and sunny smiles during his two months' leave to the hills.

And if in this year of grace 1893 the subaltern's position in the land of Ind is a precarious one, what was it in the time of our grandfathers? Then, as now, the subaltern's motto was '*noblesse oblige*,' and though his heart might be heavy within him, he manfully showed a brave front to the world, and gallantly met the claims that his position as a son of Mars forced on him. The 'trusty' race of bearers had not then arisen in the land, and his household and his housekeeping—for he does not seem to have belonged to any mess—were on the slenderest footing. This did not keep him from race, sport, or dance, or from trying to retrieve his fortune in one of the many lotteries in which our forefathers delighted.

But a groan of suffering, nevertheless, was now and again wrung from him, and a certain Jacob Sorrowful bewailed his wretched fate in moving terms.¹ How could he live and move and have

¹ Calcutta Gazette, 1787.

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But a groan of suffering, nevertheless, was now and again wrung from him, and a certain Jacob Sorrowful bewailed his wretched fate in moving terms.¹ How could he live and move and have

¹ *Calcutta Gazette*, 1787.

his being on ninety-five rupees a month? He thus makes his moan.

I am a younger son of Mars, and spend my time in carving
A thousand different ways and means to keep myself from starving,
For how with servants' wages, Sirs, and clothes can I contrive
To rent a house and feed myself on scanty ninety-five?

Six mornings out of seven I lie in bed to save
The only coat my pride can boast the service ever gave;
And as for eating twice a day, as heretofore, I strive
To measure out my frugal meal by scanty ninety-five.

The sun sunk low on Thetis' lap, I quit my crazy cot
And straight prepare my bullock's heart or liver for the pot;
For khitmudgar or cook I've not to keep my fire alive,
But puff and blow and blow and puff on scanty ninety-five.

My evening dinner gormandised, I buckle on my shoes,
And stroll among my brother subs in quest of better news;
But what, alas! can they expect from orders to derive,
Which scarce can give them any hope of keeping ninety-five?

The chit-chat hour spent in grief, I trudge it home again,
And try by smoking half the night to smoke away my pain;
But all my hopes are fruitless, and I must still contrive
To do the best a hero can on scanty ninety-five.

Alack! that e'er I left my friends to seek my fortune here,
And gave my solid pudding up for such uncertain fare;
Oh! had I chose the better way and stayed at home to thrive,
I had not known what 'tis to live on scanty ninety-five.

The 'good old times' were evidently not golden ones to the heroes of the past, though in spite of 'scanty ninety-five' Jacob Sorrowful and his fellows seem to have had a fairly good idea of enjoying life.

There is a curious old-world 'Gazette'¹ that tells us of his life at Calcutta, and gives us strange glimpses of a time that is no more. To make up for the lack of 'khitmudgar and cook,' our subaltern provided himself with a slave, and dire was his anger if his human chattel attempted to change his condition. He advertised his loss in hot haste, telling a sympathising public that for the greater security of his rights the slave had his master's initials branded on his arm. Would anyone to whom the lad might apply for employment send him back to his owner?

Luckless lad and basely defrauded owner! Surely human merchandise must have been cheap to come within the means of 'scanty ninety-five!' It was but natural that the subaltern should follow where his superior officers led the way, and those

¹ *Calcutta Gazette*, 1784-1797.

higher in the service kept not one but several slaves to do their bidding. Lieut.-Colonel Call, stationed at Fort William in 1786, advertises for a slave boy who has dared to leave him, and says he 'will esteem himself particularly obliged' if any gentleman will enable him to recover his lost property. A few years later the East India Company had recognised that slavery was a blot on our social system, and issued a notice that anyone found dealing in this 'detestable traffic,' 'so shocking to humanity,' would be punished with the 'utmost severity.' This notice, however, seems rather to apply to those who were exporting slaves than to those who kept them for their own use.

Journeys in those old days were sleepy, lengthy, and withal expensive luxuries. It was naturally a serious business to get to and from Europe, and masters of sailing vessels were, it seems, inclined to make their charges exorbitant to their luckless passengers. The Honourable East India Company, in its paternal relation to its servants, issues warnings, commands, and regulations on the subject, but apparently with little result. At last a table was drawn up, wherein it was stated that while general officers should pay 250*l.* for their passage, an ensign should only pay 105*l.*, and a cadet 70*l.* Commanders were warned that if by any ways or means, directly or indirectly, they should take or receive further sums of money for the same they should pay to the Company, for the use of the Poplar Hospital, treble the sum so taken.

For news from Europe our forefathers had, perforce, to wait with what patience they could muster. During the European war that was raging in the nineties, we find it matter of surprise and gratulation when news of the tragic histories of the autumn of '93 reached Bombay in April of the following year. We hear of the cost of a letter from Calcutta to Bombay being one rupee nine annas; while for news to travel from Madras to the capital in fourteen days is said to be 'uncommonly expeditious.' Small wonder that the excitement caused by the arrival of ships from Europe was such that by general consent existing engagements were set aside, so that all might be free to greet friends or study the news the mail had brought. An old native servant whose memory dated back to those days used to affirm that at the news of the arrival of ships in the harbour the dinner tables would be deserted, and all by one consent would make their way to the water side. What a sight it must have been in old Calcutta when the men rushed forth from the dinner

tables and boarded the welcome vessels, clamouring for news from the old world.

English ladies were few in the land, and seem then, as now, to have wrought havoc in the susceptible breast of the subaltern. It is somewhat startling to the rigid notions of propriety of these nineteenth century days to find verses of an ardent nature printed in the public journals, addressed to ladies by name, or under the flimsiest of disguises. But we must remember the refinement of those days was not that of the present time, and that our ancestors thought not as we think on matters social or political.

The duel was common, and it was no unusual occurrence for one of the principals to be left dead on the ground. Everyone was anxious to shield the survivor from the consequences of his deed, though the letter of the law was scrupulously adhered to. In 1787 occurred an instance in point. A junior officer was cited to appear before the Supreme Court of Calcutta to be tried for the murder of Captain —, of His Majesty's 73rd Foot, whom he had killed in a duel. The Colonel of the accused duly sent his subordinate under escort to his trial, but failed to produce any witnesses. The judge pointed out to the jury that in the absence of evidence they could but give one verdict. Accordingly the gentlemen of the jury, without retiring, brought in their verdict 'Not guilty,' and the prisoner was discharged.

In an official letter of the Honourable Board of Directors of the East India Company there is a curious notice relating to a duel that had taken place between Sir John Macpherson and Major James Brown. The Directors say that they have read and deliberately considered the circumstances that led to this duel, and their remarks on the same give such a curious insight into the manners of the time that we quote them in full. 'Resolved unanimously, that the apology required from Sir John Macpherson in his station of Governor-General of Bengal, and not in his private capacity, the apology stating that the paragraph which gave the offence appeared in the "Calcutta Gazette," by the authority of the government, at the head of which he (Sir John Macpherson) was, as Governor-General of Bengal. That the calling upon any person acting in the character of the Governor-General of Bengal, or Governor of either of the Company's other Presidencies, or as Counsellor, or in any other station, in respect of an official act, in the way Sir John Macpherson has been called upon, is highly improper, tends to a subversion of due subordi-

nation, may be highly injurious to the Company's service, and ought not to be suffered.' There was hot blood in the veins of those who had risen above the rank of subalterns, it seems, and with such examples before them no wonder that youth was fiery and impatient of control. We should like to know what the future of Major James Brown could have been, and how he fared after his rash quarrel with the official acts of the highest civilian of the Presidency.

In racing and sport the subaltern of the last century took as keen an interest as in the present day. There were pleasant breakfasts on the race-course at Calcutta, when the stewards entertained their friends after the races were over—a clever grouping of tents where to the strains of one of the regimental bands two hundred and fifty persons sat down in one company. The stewards' hospitality did not end here, for after breakfast the company adjourned to another tent, where a wooden floor had been prepared, and there dancing was kept up till two o'clock in the afternoon. On the last day of the races, too, there was a ball to end up with, when the stately minuet and sprightly country dance gave our fair countrywomen an occasion of displaying their grace and charm of dress and manner. At one time it is said—perhaps it was in the hot weather!—that the ladies are not such keen dancers as they used to be, and that no one is found to dance through the night and prepare for the duties of another day by a drive at sunrise round the race-course. Small wonder, and our countrywomen must have been a sprightly race for so much to have been expected of them. One New Year's Day we hear of an 'elegant dinner,' followed by a magnificent ball given by the Right Honourable the Governor-General. At the latter the 'minuet walkers were few, but the lively country-dance runners were bounding and abounding.' The supper tables 'presented every requisite to gratify the most refined Epicurean.' The ladies 'soon resumed the pleasures of the dance, and knit the rural braid in emulation of the poet's sister Graces till four in the morning, while some disciples of the jolly god of wine testified their satisfaction in pæans of satisfaction.'

Not in presence of the ladies, we will suppose! Were there any drives round the race-course to end up this more than usually brilliant entertainment? Our chronicle saith not, but we can imagine that there may have been.

Masquerades, theatricals, and lotteries, were all attractions of

the season in Calcutta. So entirely was the gambling of the latter in accordance with the spirit of the age, that it was thought proper to devote the proceeds of a lottery to the erection of a church. In this, perhaps, our 'fancy fairs' and 'sales' for the same objects are not on altogether different lines.

The subaltern had a variety to choose from in his social pleasures, and we fear he must have become spoilt for roughing life if his lot were cast there many seasons in succession. It was not all dance and music, though, in those good old times. There was a reverse to the picture, and there were dangers of field and flood to be encountered, and experiences of war with the wily native that make us even now shudder. The ghastly sufferings of those who fell into the hands of Tippoo Sultan were almost beyond belief, and death claimed many before they were released. One of the survivors, who was a prisoner with Colonel Braithwaite in Bangalore, tried to beguile his sufferings with verse.

Along the verandah we stalk,
And think of past pleasure with pain;
With arms unfolded we walk,
And sigh for those pleasures again.
We feel with regret our decay,
So meagre, so lank, and so pale;
Like ghosts we are ranged in array
When mustered in Bangalore jail.

Thus while the best days of our prime
Walk slowly and wretchedly on,
We pass the dull hours of our time
With marbles, cards, dice, and a song.
Whilst others sit mending their clothes,
Which long since began for to fail;
Amusements which lighten the woes
Of the captives in Bangalore jail.

It needed the light spirit of an Irishman, as the rhymes tell us the author must have been, thus to celebrate his woes.

There were difficulties encountered by the officers in command of native regiments, when as yet the former had not grasped the subtle windings of the invincible barriers of caste, and the newly enlisted Asiatics knew little of the stern and unbending discipline of English military law. In the autumn of 1795 the Commander-in-Chief laid before the Governor-General in Council a statement of the mutinous conduct of the 15th Battalion of Native Infantry. It was resolved that the said battalion should be 'broken with infamy,' and its colours burned. The minutes go on to state that

in order to prevent misrepresentation of the reasons of this severe punishment, a full explanation of the same shall be published in General Orders. The men of the 15th Battalion were Hindus, and therefore had the strongest prejudice against undertaking a voyage by sea. Troops were to be sent to Malacca, and it was officially reported that the battalion had volunteered for the service. However this may have been, when the time came for embarkation the men refused to obey orders. The 29th Battalion was called out to suppress this 'outrageous mutiny,' but when summoned to lay down their arms the mutineers fired on the 29th. The Commander-in-Chief acknowledges the services rendered by the 29th Battalion, and compliments the officers on the efficient state of their men. Orders are issued for the formation of a new battalion, and stringent regulations made to prevent the re-enlistment of any of the mutineers of the 15th Battalion. There was evidently something to be learnt on both sides before European officers and native soldiers could pull together.

Dacoits were bold, and seem to have dared the law with impunity. Many were the murders and robberies committed by them within the precincts of Calcutta itself, while in the mofussil (outlying districts) they were the terror of honest men. A series of more than usually daring robberies at last led the inhabitants of Calcutta to petition the government to take steps to suppress the nuisance, and to put the police on a better footing.

The old torch-lighting days, or rather nights, were over for the garrison of Fort William before the end of the century, and the Governor-General orders that links or torches be totally prohibited along the streets or on the ramparts, and the sentries at the sorties are ordered not to suffer them to pass into garrison. The march of civilisation had reached the point of 'lanthorns with candles lighted in them,' and though less picturesque than the blazing torches in the dark streets, they doubtless lessened the number of conflagrations which so often roused the slumbering inhabitants at the dead of night.

As we scan the advertisements of this same old-world 'Gazette' from which we have been culling, we find some that would be unique in any country. What a curious society it must have been in which the following appeared!

'Whereas I, John Ghent, being on the Race Ground on Monday, the 30th of January, 1786, did, without provocation,

strike Mr. Robert Hay, I in this public manner beg pardon of the said Mr. Hay for committing the aforesaid offence.

‘(Signed) JOHN GHENT.’

Here is a confession of anticipated connubial bliss made naïvely to the world at large :

‘Marriage.—On Wednesday last, John Palling, Esq., to Miss Grieveley, a young lady possessing every qualification to render the marriage state happy.’ It does not mention the qualifications of the bridegroom for the ‘marriage state.’ Let us hope they were on a level with those of the fair bride.

Sometimes, too, military men were confounded with their civilian brethren, and, though kindly disposed towards all, such a slight was not to be borne. Who will not sympathise with the following ?

‘Whereas there are several persons of the name of Price whose Christian name begins with a large J.—J. Price, Esq., doth therefore apply to so many that mistakes have frequently happened. I beg leave to decline the appellation of Esq., and request of those who do know me and of those who do not know me, but may in future have occasion to send notes, letters, or parcels, which they may pretend shall come direct to me, that they direct to

‘Captain Joseph Price,

‘Clive Street,

‘Calcutta.’

Such a comprehensive guarding against danger should have been successful. Those who know us, and those who do not know us, embrace pretty well all sorts and conditions of our fellow-men.

THE WHEEL OF THE LOUGH RUN.

I.

IN a wild and desolate part of the Irish coast there is a curious passage, several hundred yards wide and about three miles long, breaking in at right angles to the line of the shore. Into it, while the tide is rising, the sea pours itself vehemently, as though the channel led into empty space over the edge of the world, and the water were taking the opportunity of pouring itself away into infinity. The infinite, and the impossible, are two kindred words, and must here be taken as synonymous; for a great Irish lough lies at the farther end of the passage, and to fill it up to the height of the risen tide in a few hours, and through so narrow a channel, is an impossibility. Long before the level can be adjusted the tide outside is falling once more; and the water that poured in so eagerly, on its fool's errand, comes whirling angrily out again, away over the bar, far out into the open sea.

Eagerly pouring in, angrily rushing out again, the pace of the water in the channel, save for a disconcerted pause at the turn of the tide, is always tremendous. Here and there a jagged rock lifts itself in the whirling current; and in one place, where there is an awkward bend to the left, a great whirlpool writhes and roars beneath the further cliff. The Wheel is its name—white and convulsed lips that project upwards a foot above the stream, a yawning mouth and throat, a hoarse and hungry voice, have gained for it a living individuality among the Lough fishers.

The passage is known as the Lough Run. The headlong rush of the water, the crags and rocks that strew the channel, render its navigation perilous in the extreme. Nor are matters improved by the ugly bar that lies across the entrance, and which has been formed by the scourings of the Lough; for, like too many an Irish housewife, she keeps her rubbish-heap just outside the front door.

One August night the tide was nearly down, and the Wheel was roaring as hungrily as usual, while the water came pouring down the Run, and went in wild commotion out over the bar into the open sea, where all was calm, in the peace of a summer night.

It was long past midnight, and the *Tumbler*, a twenty-ton cutter, lay idly, with all sail set, drifting with the tide a mile or so from the shore. Two men, who were sitting idly on deck keeping the early watch together, looked out at the marvellous spangling of the robe of night, with eyes that were dreamy and heedless.

Not a breath of air was stirring; everywhere overhead was the spangle of the stars, and long smooth rollers that travelled incessantly across the sea towards the coast, and that came up out of the gloom, and heaved and glided on again as silently as ghosts, caught and reflected the lights brokenly, and spread in every direction a dim incessantly-moving tangle of fire upon the surface of the sea. The phosphorus-fires, too, were alight within the waves, and as they heaved and splashed against the rudder and beneath the counter of the yacht, burning sparkles fell back into the blackness of the water.

Among all these vague and mobile points of fire the lights of the cutter stared steadily towards the shore. In the north-east a distant lighthouse turned a watchful eye for a moment down the seas, and then looked away again. Over the eastern horizon the moon was just beginning to lift tilted horns that threw a wavering line of light across the waves.

Presently one of the two men, the owner of the *Tumbler*, and by name Kit Wilson, began to stir. He was sitting at the helm, and he moved it uneasily a little from side to side, and then called to his companion.

‘Graham, you sinner, what’s the use of your acting as lookout man up there forward if you don’t see anything—or swear you’ve seen something at any rate? Come down aft, old chap, and have a talk.’

The other rose from behind the listless foresail, where he had been lying so quietly, and came slowly down the deck. He stretched himself beside his friend, but did not speak, and it was once more Wilson who broke the silence:

‘I guess the skipper has got the nightmare.’

For up out of the forehatch floated at regular intervals an extraordinary sound, half choke, half snore, that wandered aimlessly about the sails and the rigging, and sauntered away into dim distance over the sea. The skipper and his men—three hands in all—were down below. And that the skipper, for one, was very fast asleep indeed there could not be the slightest doubt, Presently Wilson took up his parable again;

'There's nothing for breakfast but that bit of antiquated ham, unless we make Craighdauragh in time to raise something from the house; and I'm hanged if I think we're going to do it. Not a breath of wind!—and yet I could have sworn, half an hour ago, that that boat out there was bringing up a breeze with her.'

He pointed out to the offing, where some lights had been slowly creeping up from the distance, and were now only a few hundred yards away. Through his night-glass he had made out that they belonged to a schooner-rigged yacht that had been standing up for the Run, but had now sailed into the unlucky belt of calm wherein the *Tumbler* herself was lying.

'Another fellow going up with us,' said Wilson; 'but we can't take the Run unless we get enough wind to give us good steerage-way—it's too risky. What a nuisance it is! But *that's* where the mischief is.'

He pointed down the line of the coast, where a light current of air seemed to be setting off shore. A heavy bank of fog came creeping out, as if with the intention of interposing itself between the two yachts; and it was spreading fast towards the schooner.

Graham, stretched full-length upon the deck, paid no attention to the remarks of his friend. He was watching the marvellous play of the burning sparkles within the waves as they rose and fell beneath the counter of the yacht: for every now and then, as the *Tumbler* forged ahead a little, from far down under her keel whirled out a stream of fire that eddied about the rudder-post, and rose in bewildering circles towards the surface.

As he lay in silence a dark haggard expression came upon him, and deep lines furrowed his face; so noticeably, that Wilson began to eye him a little dubiously. Whatever his thoughts, and as far away as they might be, they were not pleasant ones.

The bank of fog came creeping every moment closer. Presently it had enveloped the schooner and hid her from sight. Kit Wilson hauled in his mainsheet and made it fast. The idle swinging of the boom perhaps was worrying him. Then he turned to his friend and touched him.

'Graham, old fellow, do you know why I asked you to come over here and pay me a visit this month?'

He got no answer at once, so went on for himself:

'Because, after the rough times you must have been having this last year or two, I thought the knocking about at sea in this old tub would pull you together and freshen you up a bit again.'

Now, if a fellow is ruined and come to smash, the best thing he can do is to pluck up and fight up-hill again.'

Graham, who was the 'fellow' in question, smiled and said rather cynically, 'Certainly.' And a moment later he added: 'But, Kit, I *am* going up-hill again. All things considered, I fancy I ought to think that I'm doing pretty well.'

The drifting fog was beginning to reach the *Tumbler*; the stars were blotted out, the risen moon hidden; grey misty darkness, feebly lit by the struggling lanterns of the yacht, enveloped her about. The outward rush of water from the Run was nearly over. The tide was on the turn, and the booming of the bar was dying away. But the skipper's snore sounded only the louder.

After a while, as though in apology on behalf of someone not there present, Graham spoke:

'The Eltons were entirely in his power. The only way for them to save themselves was, that Fairy should marry him. Perhaps she sacrificed herself to save her people. But——' He checked himself as if he had been about to say something that were better left unsaid.

Graham had been a partner in the firm of Elton & Co., which had lately come to grief.

'Well, anyhow,' said Kit gently, after a pause, 'it's done, and can't be helped. It takes all kinds of people to make a world, unfortunately. It certainly is rather rough on you; but, if what you say is true, perhaps it is rougher still on her. The man Colquhoun must be a queer sort of blackguard, I should fancy.'

'That's just it,' returned Graham. 'He *is* a first-class blackguard. He married her, knowing how matters were between us, and so is mad, I believe, with a kind of jealousy. A pretty way to start in life! He has done all he could to spoil his chances of happiness—and hers; and now he is mad with her, and with himself. They are drifting apart, I believe, Kit, more and more every day.'

With his left hand he picked viciously at a splinter in one of the timbers of the deck.

II.

CLOSE at hand in the fog arose a confused sound. Then two voices rang out in the stillness—one a woman's, thrilled with passionate repulsion—and faintly discernible through the mist

came the schooner, a boat of about forty tons, gliding slowly, her lofty upper sails filled by a slight air which passed above the fog and barely touched the more humble cutter. There were people on her deck, but too much engrossed, as it seemed, by their own affairs to notice the dim outline of the *Tumbler*.

Wilson and Graham strained their ears to hear the cause of the commotion, and their eyes to see what was taking place, and were just able to discern the persons on the schooner's deck. They were four in number: a sailor, in the bows; the skipper, at the helm; a powerfully-built man, a gentleman, standing in a singularly disconcerted attitude in the stairway that led below to the cabin; and these three were gazing uneasily at the tall straight figure of a girl that swung recklessly out on the gunwale over the grey sea. With one hand she grasped the shrouds and steadied herself as she swayed dangerously over the water.

Another moment and the schooner, forging still slowly by, had disappeared in the mist as noiselessly as she had come. Graham laid his hand upon Wilson's arm, and his grip was so painful that the other turned.

'What is it, old man?'

'Kit——' said Graham hoarsely.

'Ahoy!'

The skipper of the *Tumbler*, roused from sleep, had put his head up through the forehatch, and was giving a dubious hail, to nobody in particular. After a moment's pause an answering hail came back through the fog.

'Somebody close aboard us, sir,' said the skipper to Kit, as though that were a fact that a land-lubber like his owner could not possibly have discovered for himself. 'I *thought* I heard something.'

'Yes,' said Wilson, 'a schooner going up the Run, I fancy—and there's mischief on board. It's the boat that was lying off the Red House a few days ago.'

'The *Crane*!' ejaculated the skipper, striking one hand into the palm of the other. 'And mischief on board? Then what they were telling me down at Craigdauragh a few nights ago will, maybe, be true?'

'I've heard nothing, and I don't know the *Crane*,' said Wilson impatiently. 'What is it?'

'The Red House is let for the summer to a gentleman from London, sir, with his wife. And they don't get on very well

together, I'm told, so he has brought round this boat of his, called the *Crane*, and has discharged all his own men, and put a rapsalion crew on board, and set up poor old Alister, of Craighdauragh, as captain. And he has put his wife on board, and taken her out to break her in.'

'Taken her out to break her in?' echoed Wilson.

'Yes, sir. And he swears he won't let her set foot on land again till he has done it, bedad. When they were ashore he never let her out of his sight, for fear she would run away; for he treats her orful, sir, orful—afloat or ashore, so they say.'

'The blackguard!'

'Yes, sir,' said the skipper, accepting the inference with due deference; 'that's what he is, and no mistake. He's a city sharp. They say that he ruined the gentleman who was engaged to his wife before he married her; and that seems to be what the row's about.'

'But why on earth don't she run away, then?'

'That's just the point, sir, by what I'm told. There's something wrong about her family, and he holds them under his thumb. It would be the ruin of her father—so people say; of course I don't know anything about it—if she *was* to run away, that's clear. The gentleman could sell him up at a moment's notice—sell the very shirt off his back. And that's what he swears he will do, too. And that's why she shuts her teeth and holds on.'

The skipper shut *his* teeth too, and went forward.

'Kit,' said Graham, in a curiously low tone, 'do you know now what is the matter with me? That man on the *Crane* is Colquhoun, and the girl, his wife, *was* Fairy Elton. I knew things were bad between them, but I never thought it was as bad as this. God! that it should have come to be the common talk.'

'Hush now, man!' said Kit peremptorily. 'Don't begin to talk wildly. You may be mistaken; if you knew the skipper as well as I do you wouldn't take all he says for gospel. But here comes a bit of a breeze at last, and we shall see more of the *Crane* yet to-night.'

A light air filled the sails of the *Tumbler*, and she began to forge slowly ahead, on the track along which the schooner had passed a few minutes ago. The fog still hung listlessly on the water, but was no longer dense or uniform; for the advancing puffs of air drove paths and passages through it, and gradually it

was collecting in masses or being entirely dispersed. And presently the *Crane* was once more visible, lying idly on the water, head to wind; and the *Tumbler* forged slowly on towards her.

'*Crane, ahoy!*' shouted the skipper of the *Tumbler*.

'Hulloo!' came back the answer.

'Going up the Run?'

'Yes, when the fog clears—if we get wind enough. Is that the *Tumbler*? Is Mr. Wilson aboard?'

'He is,' responded Kit, laconically, for himself.

Alister, the man on the *Crane*, went aft, and pulled up a dinghy that was in tow behind, and got into it and cast off the rope. He was anxious, it seemed, to have a little conversation with Mr. Wilson.

'I wish, sir,' he said, when he came alongside, 'if you wouldn't mind the trouble, you would keep pretty close to us till we get up into the Lough. I should take it as a great favour, sir, if you wouldn't mind.'

'Why? is anything wrong?' asked Kit, surprised.

'Everything, sir, I think,' responded Alister gloomily. He was a weak-looking old man—not one to face a difficult situation readily. 'Things is very bad on board of us to-night, and I don't rightly know what mayn't be going to happen. Mr. Colquhoun—our owner, that is—he's asleep now, all right, down in the cabin; but we're looking out for squalls when he wakes up again; and maybe I'd be glad of somebody at hand to help me at a pinch—if you wouldn't mind standing by?'

'Certainly,' said Kit readily. 'Is there anything I can do for you now? I thought there was something wrong when you passed us a while ago.'

'Deed there was!' said Alister hastily. 'It's Mrs. Colquhoun. I wish she was on board of the *Tumbler*, instead of being with us—that I do, Mr. Wilson, with all my heart.'

'Why not?' broke in Graham, with sudden impetuosity.

'Impossible!' from Kit with decision. 'And impossible it is,' assented Alister. 'I don't know whether you know anything about Mr. Colquhoun, but it is some trouble with his lady that makes the mischief. I would be glad that she wasn't on board. So I offered, myself, only just now, to set her on shore as soon as I could—anywhere she liked—in reason, that is. But she only said, "No, it was impossible." But I'd better be getting back again, I think, Mr. Wilson; the wind's freshening.'

And he pulled back to his own craft, somewhat relieved in mind.

For an hour the two yachts cruised up and down in the light breeze before the entrance to the Run, the *Tumbler* leading the way, the *Crane* a little in the rear; ghost-like, with white sails, in the misty moonlight, flitting the one behind the other. Then it was time to attempt the passage, for the water was pouring into the channel on its way up to the Lough, and the boats had but to go with the current.

But when Kit put the *Tumbler* before the wind, making for the Run, and the *Crane*, following suit, presently came sweeping by him under a full spread of sail, he noticed that a tall powerful man had come on deck and had taken the helm.

'Colquhoun!' said Graham, in a low tone, to Wilson.

And Alister, standing beside his owner at the helm, made a sign of warning and entreaty to Kit as they passed, as if begging him to remember his promise. It was clear that the skipper of the *Crane* was uneasy, and that he would have been better pleased to have had the tiller in his own hands at such a time.

III.

YAWING rather wildly from side to side of her true course, the *Crane* passed through the troubled waters of the bar into the passage, and the *Tumbler* tumbled stoutly through behind her. As they drew down the Run, the in-set of the tide became more and more apparent; on either hand spread a lonely, desolate shore: jagged rocks reared their heads above the water, and it cried grimly against them as it raced; the *Tumbler* travelled with continually increasing velocity in the track of the *Crane*. The breeze had swept the scattered mists in curtains about the crags on either side, and, by partially concealing their outlines, added to their grim aspect. The right-hand shore was a low continuous cliff, against which the tide glanced as along a wall. But the *Tumbler* gave it a wide berth. For beneath it, at the point where the Run makes the sharp bend to the left, for an hour or two in the full strength of the tide, roars and circles the dreaded Wheel. And a couple of hundred yards earlier, in the direct track of the water as it sweeps into the whirlpool, but showing its smooth rounded back only at low water, lies the terrible Crab rock.

It is necessary, then, to keep well in, in rounding the corner,

so as to avoid being swept over by the tide towards the further cliff, and into the dangers which lie there. But that is precisely what Colquhoun did *not* do. For as the *Crane* approached the corner she sheered suddenly *out*.

'What on earth is the fellow doing!' ejaculated Wilson in a tone of utter astonishment. 'He's going right over towards the Crab! He oughtn't to take the helm at all if he don't know the channel better than that!'

The crew of the *Crane* had also realised their danger. There was a moment of frenzied altercation between Colquhoun and his skipper; only a moment, and in vain; then Alister turned to his men, and instantly they made a rush to possess themselves of the helm by force. But Colquhoun struggled fiercely with them; still, for a few moments, the *Crane* held on her course; then, suddenly, almost level with the Corner, but far over beneath the opposite cliff, she stopped dead. There was a dull crash; masts and shrouds snapped like thread and matchwood, and fell over the side.

'The drunken fool!' exclaimed Kit, rising excitedly. 'I thought so!—he's gone clean on to the Crab! Here, Tom and Larry, quick! haul in the mainsheet,' and he put up his helm. He too was bound for the Crab.

The skipper came hurrying aft. 'We daren't go across there for all the gold in the world,' he cried; 'there's the set of the race on to the cliff; and then the Wheel, too, will be breaking out——'

'Dry up!' said Kit imperiously. 'Get your anchor out, boys, ready to let go.'

The skipper wrung his hands. Then he took a haul on the foresheet with the philosophy of a sailor. So, almost at right angles to wind and tide, the *Tumbler* swept across the Run, borne broadside on up the channel. As she drew over to the Crab rock Kit edged her more and more up into the wind, judging his distance carefully, till at last her nose pointed almost up-stream. And so she drifted by the Crab, at a few yards' distance.

'Pay down your boat on a rope!' shouted Kit to the wreck as he passed. Then, edging the *Tumbler* in behind the shelter of the rock, he shook her up altogether into the wind.

'Let go your anchor, boys!' And instantly the iron splashed overboard, and the chain went rattling out. For a moment the yacht still drifted astern, gathering speed in the current; then

there came a dull check and strain—the anchor had gripped among the clean-scoured boulders in the bed of the Run, and was fast.

‘She holds!’ said the skipper, with a deep breath, that showed how doubtful such a result had been, as he saw the *Tumbler* boring uneasily upon her tether, and the swift current beat upon her bows. But Graham’s eyes for one were fixed upon the wreck.

She was lying over on her beam-ends, pressed hard by the tide upon the main rock, and within the shelter of the outlying claws, which in shape and position resemble those of a monstrous crab, and give to the whole mass its ill-omened name. Whatever feeling may have actuated Colquhoun in running the hapless *Crane* upon this rock—whether in his drunken frenzy he had not perceived it, though it reared its rounded back a foot or more above the surface, or whether he had been possessed by some sudden and savage homicidal fantasy—he had at least had a measure of luck in his manner of striking. Had he done so a few feet to right or left on the *outside* of the Crab’s claws, the yacht would have rolled back from the smooth stone, crushed in, and would have been swept away by the tide, only to founder a few yards higher up the Run. But as it was, the *Crane* was fast fixed, jammed hard by the current upon the rock; only, in no long space of time, as the Crab was gradually submerged by the rising tide, the yacht would at length be lifted bodily over into the whirl behind the stone.

The crew realised the danger of delay, and set to work at once to hold their small boat in readiness for launching; it had been lying along the deck, and, held in position by the stump of the foremast, had luckily escaped destruction. But to set it down in the boil of the water about the rock without allowing it to be swamped was an affair requiring delicate care and consideration, and the most suitable spot for the purpose was earnestly debated by Alister and his crew. Colquhoun, the author of all the mischief, was nowhere to be seen; he was not on deck, nor, in the disorder of the moment, did anyone seem to heed his disappearance. But his wife was there, holding on to the stump of the mast, and Graham gazed at her haggardly.

The swift tide beat upon the bows of the *Tumbler* and glanced on towards the cliff. Impinging heavily upon its smooth curving wall, it paused, disconcerted by the sudden check, and went wan-

dering aimlessly outward with slackened speed and an angry moan to meet the rushing water in mid-channel. There it instantly recovered its former velocity, and, falling in with the rest, went furiously up the tortuous course of the Run. Kit Wilson began to look anxiously at this swirl of the water astern, between the *Tumbler* and the curve of the cliff. Momentarily it presented a more troubled and menacing appearance, as the momentum of the in-coming tide increased; and now and again a vicious wave gathered itself together out of the confusion, and made a sudden rush and bore *upstream* towards the yacht, breaking at times almost beneath her counter.

'The Wheel, sir,' muttered the skipper, with a very perturbed face, as he too looked keenly at this particular aspect of the waters; 'that is where the Wheel will be in a few minutes, when the tide has got its full strength. I was never anywhere near to it before.'

'And don't want to be ever again,' quoth Kit, with a dare-devil laugh, all his pluck rising champagne-like to meet the situation. 'Well, if the anchor don't hold after it *has* broken out, you never *will* be again, that's pretty certain——'

A sudden exclamation from Graham interrupted him. The *Crane* had given a sudden lurch and moved; the rising water had floated her from her position, and had driven her further up upon the back of the Crab, where she again stuck fast.

This sudden move was a calamity; for the crew had just been dropping their little boat gingerly into a comparatively quiet area of the water behind the claw of the Crab, and, in the confusion and panic of the moment as the wreck moved, the boat escaped from their hands and their control, and in an instant was swept swiftly away alongside the *Tumbler*. A sailor made a hasty attempt to grasp its gunwale as it passed, but missed, and the crews of both yachts watched it blankly as, whirling wildly round, it drove in towards the cliff, and then, following the current, wandered out again into mid-channel and disappeared up the Run.

Kit was the first to recover his wits.

'Send us down the end of a rope!' he shouted. 'Quick!—there's no time to lose!'

The shipwrecked men were quick to catch his meaning, and their movements were accelerated by the ugly sounds that began to rise from the water beneath the cliff, for it moaned and writhed

as though in agony. Hastily securing the combing of the fore-hatch to the end of a rope, they swung it overboard and paid out the rope as the hatch was swept away, till it arrived beneath the bows of the *Tumbler*. The skipper seized it and dragged it on board. The rope-end was secured to the bow of the *Tumbler's* punt, and the tiny craft was dropped carefully over the side of the yacht. Then the people on the wreck hauled in their rope again, and drew the punt up to them, bringing it skilfully into the slack behind the claw of the Crab, and motioned hastily to Mrs. Colquhoun to take her place.

The moan and writhe of the water behind the *Tumbler* increased in intensity; then, with a hideous roar as of a living creature rent asunder, from away under the cliff a wave suddenly and swiftly swept upstream.

'Look!' said the skipper, with a scared face—'the Wheel!'

Sixty yards astern a large circle had appeared—a great white lip of water standing up above the tide and beating it back in whirling foam; the lip of a vast yawning mouth that gaped upward to the moon, and from whence issued a dull roar. The Wheel had broken out at last—a whirling pit of water that howled as if for prey.

'Cheerful!' shouted Kit to the skipper, and hardly making himself heard; 'the Maelstrom would hardly beat that.'

'I never was there,' replied the skipper, with his scared face. It was all he had to say.

IV.

THE moonlight fell upon the Wheel and the yacht, upon the glancing water and upon the frail boat that came travelling slowly down, stern first, upon the guiding rope. Frail indeed it seemed to Graham, as he watched it with wolfish anxiety, to carry such a freight in such a passage. He stood forward eagerly; slowly it came travelling down, a seaman in the bow, and in the stern the figure of a girl, muffled from head to foot in a heavy cloak, as though hiding more from herself than from the dangers about her.

But when they arrived alongside, and the seaman jumped lightly on board, it was Kit Wilson who received Mrs. Colquhoun and led her across the deck; for at the last moment Graham fell

back among the crew; and so, heavily muffled still, she passed below, unconscious of his presence.

Once more the punt came travelling down, bearing the rest of the *Crane's* men,—save Alister himself; and *he* remained behind, engaged in anxious entreaty with someone who was down below in the cabin.

'Mister Colquhoun it is, bad cess to him,' said one of the sailors. 'Bedad, it's the devil himself is in him to-night, wid dhrink and rage; maybe he won't be for coming off the wreck at all the night. Bad seran to him! 'twould do him good to lave him there altogether.'

But Alister had evidently over-persuaded him; he showed himself on deck, and presently the pair were travelling down together; the wreck was deserted. The end of the rope had been made fast to the broken stump of the foremast, and Colquhoun, in the bows of the boat, was paying out the rope as they dropped down towards the *Tumbler*. Soon they were alongside, and Alister jumped hastily on board. But as Colquhoun was reaching out a hand to the *Tumbler*, to steady himself preparatory to following, he chanced to look up, and met the eyes of Graham.

'*You!*' he said hoarsely, and staggering as though someone had dealt him a blow. '*You here!* That is too much of a good thing.'

Before anyone knew what he was about to do, or could stretch a hand to stop him, he had pushed away from the yacht, and paid out a few yards more of the rope. The punt glanced along the side of the *Tumbler*, and again paused, swinging dangerously on its tether. Ten yards separated the boat and the yacht; fifty more, and the water that flashed by them both was circling in the Wheel. And the Wheel roared hungrily.

'Graham!' shouted Colquhoun, with jeering ferocity; 'Graham!—Aha, there you are!' His position, his attitude, his dishevelled air and wild eyes called more for pity than perhaps the man deserved.

'Tis as I thought, sir,' whispered Alister to Wilson. 'Couldn't we get a hold of the rope and haul him in? He'll maybe let himself go into the Wheel if we don't. It's mad he is; mad, with the drink and all, entirely.'

Wilson tried furtively to follow the suggestion; but as he made a reach for the rope that stretched alongside, Colquhoun once more shouted loudly, with fierce determination:

'Let go that rope!—or I leave go *here*.' And Kit dared not tempt him farther.

'You fellow there—Graham!' went on the other, with redoubled violence, holding the tether with one hand only precariously, and waving his free arm to the yacht with a recklessness of gesture that the roar of the Wheel seemed only to intensify—'don't you think you are a happy man? You have your old love with you, there, on board; and here am I, that stood between you, on the brink of hell. You it is that have driven me to it, you and she together. But do not you think that you have beaten me yet: I came between you once, and now I come between you again, for ever. For between you shall lie the blood of a man! Win her if you like, marry her if you can, after *this*!'

Even as he spoke, the wretched man loosed his hold of the rope, and in an instant was whirled away towards the Wheel.

'I parted you once,' he repeated with mad emphasis, standing up in the frail swaying craft, and flinging up his arms wildly, 'and now I part you again. Marry her if you can, after *this*—aha!'

There had been a commotion at the cutter's prow: Graham and Wilson struggling together. But Wilson was the stronger, and held his friend securely. 'Are you mad also?' he said fiercely; 'there is nothing to be done.'

The men on the yacht stared with blanched faces as the boat containing Colquhoun leaped madly up into the white writhing lip of the whirlpool and disappeared over the brink. As he went down into the pit he once more waved an arm and shouted aloud. For a moment the white lip dropped, the dull roar for a moment intermitted; out of the cavernous recesses of the whirlpool came a heavy choking sigh as the hideous pipe gulped down its prey; then once more the lips projected, and the roar of the unsatisfied monster went up again, insatiable.

V.

THE sun, rising in a clear cloudless sky, spread a glorious golden glow upon the fantastic crags and cliffs of the Run. The rocks were white with dense masses of gulls. Now and again a great heron-crane lifted himself heavily from some unnoticed resting-place, and flew away up to the Lough to look for breakfast, with long legs trailing out behind him, head buried between his

shoulders, and long sharp beak pointing his way before him. A seal puffing in the swift current showed his head for a moment as he coasted cautiously round a rock by the shore, where the tide was slack.

The Wheel was gone—it roars but for an hour or two, in the full strength of the Run. And the ill-fated *Crane* also had disappeared; the rising tide had lifted her bodily over the back of the Crab, and the stump of a mast sticking up out of the swirl behind the rock alone showed where she lay.

Gone, too, was the *Tumbler*. But far away on the Lough, with white wings set to catch the brisk morning breeze, the stout little cutter was drawing up towards a great red house that stood back from the water, in a hollow surrounded by trees. It was the Red House, which Colquhoun had taken for the summer; which he had so lately left with his wife, and to which she was now returning—a widow.

Far away on the opposite shore, a gleam of white on a hill, was the village of Craighdauragh—the home of Kit Wilson.

The yacht came gently up to the moorings at which the luckless *Crane* had so lately been swinging in the quiet waves of the Lough, and was presently fast. A gig was lying there, and in it Wilson sent ashore not only the crew of the *Crane*, but also, under one pretext or another, his own men too, till there remained on deck himself and Graham only. Then he went below, to the cabin, and after some little time reappeared. There was an unspoken inquiry, or perhaps entreaty, in the eyes of his friend, to which he returned an answer by an affirmative nod of the head, and then he took Graham's arm.

'Yes, old fellow,' he said, 'take her ashore yourself. She appears very anxious to go. But be gentle with her. I have told her everything . . . she understands all . . . I told her—' he went on, after a slight pause, and with a gentle pressure of his hand upon his friend's arm—'how you wished to go overboard to try and save her husband, and how I prevented you. For it was madness, old fellow . . . at that moment, and in that place, there was nothing to be done. But go down and take her ashore now. And be gentle with her—she needs it.'

The foresail was still set, hauled to windward, and Wilson stood behind it.

Presently Graham came on deck with Mrs. Colquhoun. He led her over to the yacht's punt that lay alongside, and, handing

her down into it, a moment later was pulling with long (almost strong) sweeping strokes towards the shore.

The solitary man on deck watched them as they went.

The punt was perhaps longer in reaching the landing-place than it need have been, for several times Graham rested upon his oars; and once (the watcher fancied) his face was bowed almost to his companion's hands. But he helped her ashore, and, she leaning heavily on his arm, they passed up towards the house. A bend of the path; and they were hidden by some shrubs, another bend, and they were in under the shadow of the trees. A flutter of a dress, and they were gone.

And as Kit watched he fancied that he saw Graham once more as he used to be—a strong light-hearted fellow. Many another trip would they make together, thought he, in this same Lough. . . . And then—well then

Somehow an old verse of the Bible went continually through his ears, concerning an evil man: how that his place should know him no more. And it seemed to him that the curse of such a man could not avail to stay or to turn aside the high call of the world. Little good had he done to humanity, that he should not drop out of sight as a stone that falls; or that his words should be remembered after him. . . .

‘The best act that I ever did in my life,’ he muttered, ‘was to get old Graham out on this trip.’

For a long time Kit mused on. His eyes were looking dreamily away towards Craigdauragh; his thoughts were away in that little village also, and, to judge by his face, they were sweet thoughts too. The sun seemed to pitch upon his back with a power unnoticed but a few minutes ago; he felt warm, comfortable, young, and happy.

‘Yes,’ he said, almost aloud, ‘I’ll eat that antiquated ham for breakfast, as I’m a sinner. If that old beggar, Graham, gets back in time,’ he added, looking up towards the house.

And the man he saw striding airily down the winding path was not the Graham of yesterday, but a new man in whose heart there lived again both faith, and hope—and charity.

IN SUMMER HEAT.

THE spring and early summer of the year 1893 will be long remembered as an exceptionally dry season; four months of uninterrupted sunshine we had in the neighbourhood of the Surrey Hills; how hot that weather was those only who have had to be out in it busy at their various avocations, from sunrise to sunset, can tell. It may interest some if I give a few notes made here and there, as I wandered to and fro, all connected more or less with the recent dry, hot spell of almost tropical weather.

Now and again I have heard some amusing squabbles concerning the dryness of the season. 'Ah well, you ken jist say what you likes, Master Wiggins, ef you don't 'zactly member sich a time as this 'ere afore, I do. Weather like this 'twas when I was married; some of the folks went chouterin' about, poor silly critters, saying as how the fust sign of the end were cum, fur the world was to pass away in a great heat. But it didn't; an' here I be now, grandmother to a rare lot on 'em. There was allus a seed time an' harvest, an' there will be, for the Book says it. We'll get rain when the time cums.'

Day by day the heat increased; after a time green places exposed to the fierce rays of the sun lost their freshness, changed to brown withered patches, and remained so, no food or shelter there, even for a mouse. A certain amount of moisture is necessary for the development of insect life in all its various forms; and birds and animals follow their food supply. Where streams run through the woods covered over by the underwood and grass tangle; where the water in ordinary seasons forms small pools in the water-meadows—dry often on the surface, but moist enough below—there are the places in which to look for natural life. If you know the run and lay of water, whether in stream, pool, or as a mere splash, you will find the creatures you are in search of not far from it.

Some of the wilder park lands have shown most significantly how the heat has affected them, for there has been an almost complete absence, in the more exposed places, of certain creatures that in ordinary seasons you never missed seeing if you passed along. It is all owing to the great heat; they have followed other creatures and gone for a time to low, moist dells and hollows,

where the grass grows green. Necessity recognises no law, and to all intents and purposes the earth has been bound as fast for all insect-feeding birds as it is in mid-winter.

The pewits have chased the rooks like a lot of hawks striking at their quarry; food they must have of some kind, and in default of worms, grubs, and wireworms, they have gone in for plovers' eggs, when they could get them. As to fruit, I have seen some barefaced depredations in that line. Yet they will repay all these a thousand times, before long; for rain has come at last, and the rooks and jackdaws, rejoicing greatly at the change, are in the fields hard at work on the store of life which has now come up to the surface.

The poor little jackdaw has suffered terribly this season, for he has been found in the very act—there is not the least use in denying it—he was caught red-handed, as the saying goes, killing young pheasants and partridges.

The experience of a lifetime devoted to the observation of natural life has taught me that there is no hard and fast rule for any living creature that is in a state of nature; and before long I believe that many mischievous theories will be swept away. Some indeed of these have been originated by men who have gained much of their knowledge—of bird life especially—from boxes of dry skins. All the elaborate lists of genera ever compiled would not give their readers the life habits of a sparrow. This is a digression, however.

The late spell of burning sunshine has had a peculiar effect on our reptiles, which are harmless with of course one exception, the viper. They have left their usual haunts, although they do like heat, in order to follow their prey to lower ground at the bottom of the hills. Some very large specimens of vipers have been killed, far exceeding any that I have ever seen or handled. These were females, for it is with them as it is with falcons and hawks, and in fact with all birds of prey, the gentler sex is the larger and the stronger, and in some instances the most vindictive.

This season, although I have been in those haunts where they are as a rule generally to be found, I have not myself seen one of these vipers alive; and those men I know, who look for them for their precious 'ile,' as they call the fat inside of them, have had the same tale to tell.

Two blindworms and one heath-lizard, killed it would seem by some one as the poor things were crossing the high-road in self-

defence, are all that I have noticed. No matter what the creature may be, furred or feathered, it will get as close to the high-roads as possible. Those giant viperesses I have mentioned were killed in a much frequented road, as they were basking, stretched out full length in the middle of it. I know why they got there, but cannot enter into that matter here.

Rooks and jackdaws make short work of any creature they can settle. In hot, dry times they will go for anything that moves. Game birds again make short work of small reptiles, and they help to thin them down in hot seasons.

The hedgehog has been remarkably busy, at night of course, in foraging for any creature he can settle; not only that, but he and his spined partner have had little pigs to provide for; and early in the morning I have noticed their tracks in the dust of the road, where father and mother hedgehog and the little ones have been all on the root. They leave a very plain track; you may note where they have crossed and recrossed the road, always in the direction of spots where they were certain to find some little 'varmint' or other. Their noses are remarkably keen ones; the crawlers may have settled comfortably for the night on a bed of dead leaves and moss, very full of frogs, mouse or lizard, as the case may be, but let that energetic pair of prickly wanderers nose them out, and the forked tongue will never examine anything with lightning-like rapidity again. Out the creature is dragged, neck and tail, the long fore feet of the pair are placed on him to stop all wriggling, and the body is passed through the jaws; one of the hedgehogs starts from the neck, the other from the tail. That wonderful cup-and-ball mechanism of the creature's backbone is quickly broken up, jointed in fact, and embalmed by the hedgehog family.

Some of the uplands have been scorched up, others covered with trees and scrub have remained fresh and cool through it all, the brake being of the richest green; all depended of course on aspect and locality. Water has been a precious article on the tops of some of our Surrey Hills recently, in fact people have been forced to buy it. I have heard that in some places as much as sixpence a pail has been given for good drinking water. In the most favourable times they rely generally on their rain water supply, filtered. One favoured place was full of life, for the grass was fresh and green there all through the dry time, and the bracken flourished in rank luxuriance. Honeysuckles twined

thickly about the bushes, and the foxgloves held up their stately flower-bells in all directions, mixed with the cool mothmulleins, and other plants too numerous for us to mention.

As I have often said before, wild creatures can, and do, adapt themselves to their surroundings. If they did not some would cease to exist. The veracity of some writers has been questioned when they wrote only the simple truth, because they have seen animals and birds act in a certain manner, influenced by their surroundings, in one county; whilst other writers, equally accurate, have seen the same creatures act very differently in another county, perhaps an adjoining one. The nature or the food of the creature does not change; it simply alters some of its tactics in order to procure that food, or for the purpose of self-preservation.

Numbers of birds have followed in each other's traces to spots where the grass was growing green, in search of the water which in some shape or other was to be found there. The herons that were not usually seen before the fall of the leaf, when the trout run, have been wandering about in the middle of the day, fishing, for the streams have been low, and all the fish without exception have congregated in the deepest and most shady water holes they could find, under overhanging boughs of trees.

The heron has visited the ponds on the uplands, swarming with small carp about three inches in length, well knowing that he could fill his belly, without the least trouble, out of the muddy pits the ponds have dwindled down to. One morning I put out a kingfisher from a clump of trees a good mile away from any stream; he also had come up for some of those small carp that could be captured so very easily.

I have seen roach about four inches in length, lying on the short grass of a bare hillside, very early in the morning recently. A strange sight truly to see dead fish in the short tangle, but the fly-lines of the herons are directly over the hill, past the fir plantation, where the fierce sparrowhawks have kept watch and ward lately, because the young wood-pigeons, now well on the wing, have been bred there in great numbers this season. Both old and young are in great force here. The hawks are not particular so long as it is a pigeon; but the young birds are captured with the least trouble.

I have not seen one hawk shot this season; not that there is more mercy shown them than of old, but for this reason—all the time during which they are devoting their energies to the capture

of wild pigeons they do not go at the young game. From the number of pigeons I have seen come from the furze I should imagine there were enough of them to feed all the hawks in the county of Surrey. Sparrowhawks will strike at anything, and when they watch for the pigeons to come out from their nesting-place, if they catch sight of the great heron as he flaps over the hillside, his gullet filled with fish, at him they go at once. The heron gets frightened; not that they could damage him much; but out he throws some of his fish, to lighten himself so that he can ring up higher, and that is the reason small fish are sometimes found on the hillside.

Weasels and owls are required now to keep the small deer under (but they are not to be seen; oh, the pity of it!); steel traps and tile traps combined will not do the work they would. Where we are the mischief mice will do in gardens where choice fruit is cultivated must be seen to be believed. I have seen two very fine and choice cherry trees, trained on trellis work against a sunny wall, nearly stripped by them, for they climb like squirrels. A number of square holes, just large enough to get your hand in comfortably, let the air through the grating into the cool-houses on the other side, where plums are grown. From certain signs I thought that those very pretty and innocent-looking, full-eyed, long-tailed creatures were the robbers. A short ladder was brought and the holes examined, and from each of them a handful of the ripest and finest cherries gave a convincing proof of their refined taste. They had been cut off as close to the stalks as if they had been snapped with thumb and finger-nail. Some were half eaten, others had their skins broken, and a lot were perfect; you could just see where the teeth had pressed and that was all. When I showed the fruit to the owner of those trees he expressed wishes towards the mice that need not be mentioned here.

The landrails have not been heard in this district; their crake, crake, crake has not sounded even in the most favoured parts, let alone those that have been parched up. This bird requires thick pasture cover; fields laid down for hay will in ordinary seasons be sure to have one pair at least nesting in them. The size of the field has nothing to do with the number of birds found. But this season, as a rule, there has not been any hay to cut; even the sheep have been fed and watered for a long time, horned cattle also; in fact, green grass has been a very scarce

food supply ; even the wild rabbits have been put in some straits, and they are supposed to do well on hard fare. Chalk hills, however, have only a crust of mould on their tops and sides, so it is small wonder that they have been burnt up.

A certain amount of moisture is of vital moment to the land-rail, or corn-crake as the bird is generally called ; one small meadow of about two acres, which I have passed twice every day during April, May, June, and July, is usually a sure spot where they may be found. On both sides and in front of it run roads, well-used ones, too, and a railway is at the back of it, and yet here they come in preference to places that might be considered far more suitable for them, but the birds know best about that. As the field is small, the owner has it mown, not cut with a machine, and the nesting-birds are spared, if possible, for a small tuft is left for them ; in fact, the mowers cut round them and pass on. But this year the rail is absent.

This bird when sitting has no fear, for although the haymakers were tossing the grass up in all directions, spreading it out to dry, and coming now and again to have a look at her as she has sat on her nest, the bird has never moved. Between three and four in the afternoon, when she hatched out, she went off with her little black mouse-like brood, just like a farm-yard hen.

Pheasants and partridges are treated in the same way ; the mowers cut round them. Accidents do occur at times, but they are accidents pure and simple, and the wonder is that there is not more of them, for the birds sit very close.

This long spell of hot weather has caused all birds to get their young out a month or five weeks earlier than in ordinary seasons. The tree pipits, very numerous this season, are gone with their young from their usual haunts ; the white-throats, the greater and lesser, are ready for moving. So are the turtle-doves ; young and old cut through the air in all directions. Starlings have visited the fruit in numbers ; the poor things must have something for their young. I have even seen the skylark in gardens—most unusual places for him to come to. Wasps, through the hardness and extreme dryness of the ground, have made their nests in blackthorn bushes and the like. They are beautiful structures ; at first you would take them for the nest of the long-tailed tit ; that is exactly what they look like a short distance off, but a close inspection at once convinces you that they are nothing of the

kind. I have been fortunate enough to procure a fine specimen—without its tenants.

The doves have worked hard for their young this season, when they were in the nest and after they were able to fly. I live on the edge of a small common; as a rule this is fresh and green all the year round, but this season it has been baked; even the cock-chafers, that at certain seasons the rooks hunt for with the greatest eagerness, have been scarce through the drought. The poor birds knew it was not the least use trying to pick anything up in the daytime, so directly it was light some of them brought their young on the turf beneath my window, and there they kicked up a row. There were the old rooks stocking away at the grubs and chafers, croaking now and then, because they have to work hard for small returns, and there are the young rooks hopping round their parents with open mouths and quivering wings, in a state of eager expectancy. There is nothing to be heard but tremulous war—are—are—wark—war—ke are ar, wark—e—e. As we are in the habit of sleeping with our windows open, their music wakes us up very early. Sometimes I get up in the grey of the morning to look at their amusing antics; but they are not good songsters.

Rain has fallen—genial refreshing showers—all in its own good time, as the old lady told Master Wiggins it would. They are cutting the corn, and the corn looks well. They sowed and now they reap, as they have ever done.

The trees are changing; the leaves will fall early, we think, this season. From certain movements I have noted in some birds—the migrating portion of them—it will not be long before they depart and others arrive.

Look where you will, the brown colour has gone, for we have had the blessed rain. Go where you will, in all directions and in all places, the grass grows green.

NOVEMBER.

NOVEMBER—and the world of shades is here !

The sun hangs like a wafer in the sky,
Shorn of his feeblest beams ; no majesty

The clouds wear, but all blanched with shapeless fear
Trail on the earth ; the ploughboy ploughing near

Moves insubstantial, scarce less shadowy

Than the curled mist his breath makes ; while the lea
Looms half a green blot, half a vaporous smear.

And lo, what forms are these beside the streams

That bend and shudder like to joyless ghosts ?

Can they be trees stripped bare that only sigh

As the bleak wind sweeps through them, or do hosts

Of phantoms wail, anguished by fitful gleams

From life far-off, golden with memory ?

CHARACTER NOTE.

THE CARETAKER.

Quand c'est le cœur qui conduit, il entraîne.

MARTHA caretakes a decrepit City warehouse. She cleans, or imagines that she cleans, the offices of a depressed company of tea merchants and of a necessitous land surveyor. They damn her hopelessly when they arrive every morning and behold the thickness of the dust on their ledgers and the black and smoky nature of their fires. And Martha speaks of them tenderly as 'my gentlemen,' and inquires fondly after their wives and families.

Martha's appearance has, it must be confessed, a worn and dingy air, not unlike the house she lives in. She is invariably attired in an ancient shawl and a frowsy black bonnet. People are apt to forget that the wrinkled old face beneath it is very kind and tender. The blackness of Martha's aprons and the streaky nature of her house-cleaning cause them to lose sight of the fact that London griminess has never reached Martha's soul.

Martha is boundlessly simple and contented. It is fortunate that an external cleanliness is not necessary to her happiness, since it has been her fate to look at Thames Street, breathe Thames Street, and live in Thames Street since she was five-and-twenty. Once she has been into the country. But that was a long time ago; though on the window-sill of her attic there still live miserably some of the cuttings she took from the plants she brought back with her.

Martha waters those forlorn and stunted geraniums with the greatest pride and indiscretion. She imagines that the smutty and despairing musk still smells deliciously, and puts her old nose into it and sniffs with the greatest enjoyment in the world. On sultry days she opens her window and sits at work by her 'garden.' Her old face is quite placid and contented. The expressive language of the costermonger below falls upon her ear. The refreshing scent of decaying vegetables must quite overpower that of the elderly musk. But either Martha has long ceased to expect unalloyed pleasure, or is of such a very simple nature that she can enjoy imperfect happiness perfectly.

Martha is very proud of her attic. It may not, in fact, does not, contain much oxygen. But there is a beautiful picture of the Queen smiling blandly out of a tradesman's almanac of the year fifty. Martha's circumstances render it necessary that there should constantly be washing drying in lines across the ceiling. But she takes her meals quite blithely beneath this canopy and has no feelings at all about cutting her cheese—she never seems to eat anything except cheese or drink anything except tea—on the patchwork quilt which covers the *négligé* manner in which she has made her bed.

Martha has a table, indeed, but it is quite covered with the accumulated treasures of a life-time. There is a religious work presented to her by a Bible Christian minister angling for a congregation, which Martha values no doubt the more because she cannot read it. There is a creature which may or may not represent a parrot, with boot buttons for eyes and a body of many-coloured wools. Martha blows the dust from the glass case which incloses it, with an infinite affection and reverence. She made the parrot herself a long, long time ago, and is tenderly proud of it still. By its side is a Testament scored by a hand long dead, and with Martha's homely name written in the fly leaf. There are two china shepherdesses, with pink sashes and squints, on the mantelpiece, and an In Memoriam card of Martha's dead nephew.

By the window there is a bird in a cage, to whom Martha chirrups cheerfully, and whom she addresses as 'Enery. The bird never chirrups to Martha—old age and the stifling air of Thames Street having long silenced him for ever. But Martha's placid optimism has caused her to believe persistently for many years that if she only chirrups long and cheerfully enough, 'Enery will reply to her at last.

'He's wonderful for company,' she says, 'and eats next to nothing.' Which to Martha's mind is the greatest recommendation a friend can have.

Martha is indeed well paid for her caretaking. When one considers the sketchy nature of her cleaning she appears to be ridiculously overpaid. Martha's money is not spent on herself. She eats very little—and cheese and tea may be bought incredibly cheap and nasty in Thames Street. She indulges in no vanities of dress. The frowsy shawl and bonnet are of immemorial antiquity. Her employers surmise uncharitably that she does not waste her substance on soap. Martha, in fact, wastes nothing.

She has a money-box secreted in a drawer amid an awful confusion of other treasures. She is a miser. She has saved and stinted herself for years and years. She has denied herself not luxuries, for luxuries have never even suggested themselves to her, but what other people would call necessities.

On that far-off visit to the country Martha found and loved a great-niece. Tilly was, it must be confessed, a dreadful, stout, stolid, apple-cheeked plebeian baby. But she took possession of Martha's lonely old heart. Martha carried back to London a cheap photograph of Tilly in her best frock, and a deep-seated resolution concerning Tilly in her foolish old soul. When Tilly is old enough she is to come up to London to live, at Martha's expense, with Martha, and be 'prenticed to what Martha speaks of reverentially in the abstract as 'the dressmaking.' Martha, like a true Cockney, loves and despises the country, and is convinced that London is the only place in which to get on. And the dress-making is such a genteel employment.

To 'prentice Tilly to a very good house, to be able to clothe Tilly as her high position will require, to be able to support Tilly what Martha calls 'elegant,' Martha instituted the money-box, and puts into it weekly much more than she can afford. She works for Tilly with the dogged persistence of the woman of one idea. The stout earthy child whom she has not seen for a dozen years or more has been beautified, perhaps beyond recognition, in her fond and foolish imagination. Or she thinks that large, red cheeks, and a stolid gaze—admirably caught by the cheap photograph—are incapable of improvement. Tilly's picture is assigned an honourable place by the side of a terrible, but beloved portrait of the Prince of Wales. Though Martha is devotedly attached to the Royal Family, there have been days on which the Prince's countenance has been left thick in dust. But Martha always makes a point of cleaning Tilly reverentially with a corner of her shawl. She gazes at the picture when she has performed this operation with an admiration and tenderness in her dim old eyes, which are quite ridiculous and pathetic. Two or three times a week she breathes on the glass which protects Tilly, and rubs it vigorously with a piece of a cloth used indiscriminately as a duster or a handkerchief.

For Tilly's sake she refuses to join a party of lady friends who are going by water to Greenwich. One has to live in Thames Street, perhaps, to know what a temptation such an expedition

represents. The land surveyor's wife sends Martha a cheap petticoat for a Christmas present. It is beautifully striped in many colours, and Martha says, 'It's too good for my likes,' and puts it tenderly away in a drawer for Tilly. For Tilly's sake she denies herself sugar in her tea. For Tilly's sake she creeps about the old house in boots so aged that the tea merchant is constrained to speak to her severely on her disreputable appearance. For Tilly's sake she goes to bed early to save candles, and lies awake hour after hour with her old thoughts to keep her company. For Tilly's sake she daily makes, in fact, the thousand little sacrifices of which only a great love is capable.

The tea merchant, exasperated beyond bearing at last at her incompetence, tells her her services will be no longer required. On consideration, perhaps, of her having inquired tenderly after his relations every morning for an indefinite number of years, he consents to her still occupying the attic on the payment of a modest rent.

Then Martha seeks some new employment. Her old heart sinks when a week has passed and she has failed to find it. For herself she can live on almost nothing. But Tilly is seventeen now, and is coming up to London next year. Martha would rather starve than take a penny from her money-box. She has called it Tilly's money so long that she really believes now to spend it would be robbing Tilly of her own. She is reduced to selling 'Enery—with tears. He fetches a very, very small sum, and Martha has loved him as if he were a human creature. The theological work presented by the Bible Christian minister goes also, and Martha, who has never read it, cannot see the vacant place on the table because of the mist in her old eyes.

At last she is engaged by the parish clergyman to clean the church. Up to this period Martha has been a Baptist—not so much because she has a leaning towards that particular sect, or any particular sect, as because the Baptist chapel is very handy, the minister affable, and the footstools large, fat, comfortable ones of a showy red baize.

'But it'd be sooperstition to let them 'assicks stand in the way of my niece,' Martha says thoughtfully to herself. The 'assicks do not stand in Tilly's way. In a day or two Martha, with an optimistic smile on her wrinkled old face, may be seen providing Ritualistic books of devotion to devout young gentlemen who have come to church to attend Prime.

Then Tilly comes. Martha has house-cleaned her room for Tilly's reception. She has not, indeed, house-cleaned it very thoroughly, partly because she has not had time and is seventy years old and a little feeble, and partly because Martha has never cleaned anything thoroughly, including herself. But she has blown the dust off most things, and put up a piece of new window curtain. She has bought a shilling looking-glass for Tilly's benefit, Martha never seeing her own kind, tender, wrinkled, grubby old countenance from year's end to year's end. She has provided quite a sumptuous tea—with sugar. She has made the bed almost neatly. She has, in fact, done everything that love can suggest to her.

Before she goes out in the frowsy bonnet and ancient shawl to meet Tilly at the station she takes a last look, through eyes proudly and tenderly dim, at Tilly's picture. The day has come for which she has been working for years, for which she has denied herself gladly, for which she has yearned and prayed. She can feel her heart beating quicker under the threadbare shawl, and her hands tremble a little.

She is much too early for the train, and has to wait so long in the waiting-room where she has arranged to meet Tilly that she falls into a doze. A robust female with a developed figure, a tight waist, and a flowery hat, nudges her at last impatiently with a tin hat-box.

'Lor, aunt!' says Tilly, 'what with you so shabby, and snoring so ungenteel in a public place, I 'ardly liked to own yer.'

'My dear!' cries Martha in a trembling voice. 'My dear! My dear!' and she puts her withered old arms round the girl's neck, and kisses her and cries over her for happiness.

'What a take on to be sure!' says Tilly, who is perfectly practical. 'Let's go 'ome.'

And they go home and begin life together.

For a month Martha is happy. She is happy at least so far that she can watch the accomplished Tilda reading a novelette, and profoundly admire so much education. She puts her ridiculous old head on one side, to look proudly and fondly at the stylish black curls shading Tilly's rubicund countenance. She ventures to kiss Tilly's cheek very gently when that young lady is snoring profoundly after a day's pleasure, for Tilly has not yet started 'the dressmaking.' And the premium is still wrapped up safely in dingy newspaper in the money-box.

Martha is creeping up one night weary, but optimistic, after a hard day's cleaning at the church, when a slipshod infant from next door thrusts a note into her hand. The slipshod infant, who has received an education, reads it to Martha at Martha's desire. It contains only a few lines.

Tilly has gone away. Tilly has eloped with a costermonger. Married respectable at a registry, she phrases it. 'That's all,' says the infant of education.

That is all. But that is why Martha falls back with her face drawn and ashen, and her lips trembling. That is all. It is the end of those years of work and denial and hoping. Yet what is more natural than that Tilly should desire matrimony, and try her blandishments upon a costermonger who plied his trade most conveniently beneath Martha's window? What is more natural in this cruel world than love repaid by ingratitude, and trustfulness by deceit?

Martha gropes her way blindly to the attic. It is not yet so dark there but she can see distinctly the poor little improvements she made for Tilly's coming. She turns the cheap looking-glass with its face to the wall. It was meant to reproduce Tilly, buxom and twenty, and not Martha, poor, old, ugly, and disappointed. She catches sight of Tilly's picture at four years old—Tilly, stolid enough indeed, but little, loving, and good. And Martha cries, and buries her head in her arms; and the tears mark grimy courses down her furrowed cheeks.

'If you could 'a trusted me, Tilly,' she says. 'If you would but 'a trusted me.'

Until this bitter hour she has not known how Tilly has filled her life. How she has lived only for Tilly, and thought and hoped only for her. And Tilly has gone away, and Martha's house is left unto her desolate.

A footstep outside startles her. For one wild foolish moment she thinks that Tilly has come back—that she has but dreamt a bad dream and is awake again. And she recognises the voluble tones of the mamma of the educated infant, and dries her tears, not from pride—Martha has so little—but from loyalty to Tilda.

Mrs. Jones always have said that Tilda was a bad lot. 'A impudent, brazen-faced thing,' says Mrs. Jones, warming to the description.

And Martha, with a little colour coming into her poor white

cheeks, knows as Tilly meant no harm. And marriages are made in 'eaven.

She may have to acknowledge Tilda erring to her own heart, but how can she give her up to the merciless judgment of a merciless world?

'You're a poor sperited one, that you are,' says Mrs. Jones, 'and as likely as not you've never looked to see if she 'ave made off with the premium.'

Martha has not looked. Is startled into confessing it. She has not thought of the premium, so hardly earned. She has only thought that she has loved Tilda, and Tilda has not loved her. And a swift burning colour comes into Martha's cheeks, and some sudden deadly premonition creeps to her heart and closes coldly upon it. And she answers steadily, 'My Tilda's as honest as you are.'

'Don't you be so sure,' says Mrs. Jones vindictively. 'You look and see.'

Perhaps Martha takes some sort of resolution as she goes heavily to the drawer where the money-box is kept. Or perhaps no resolution is necessary, because her ignorant, loving old soul is of its nature infinitely faithful. Her hands and lips are quite steady now, and she is not afraid of Mrs. Jones's 'sperited' gaze. The money-box is quite light, and the money collected was chiefly in pence and halfpence. It is also unlocked. And Martha turns with her back to the drawer and faces Tilda's enemies.

'You can tell all as asks,' she says in an old voice that is very clear and firm, 'as my Tilda is quite straight and honest. And them as says she isn't—lies.'

'I'll believe as you speak true,' says Mrs. Jones. 'If you don't, well, the Lord forgive you.'

And who shall say that He will not?

AN EGYPTIAN FRAGMENT.

It was during the gabble of a general election that Professor Glidders packed his bag and started for Egypt to continue his excavations. He wanted to be down amongst his Egyptian dead men again; he did not care an old spade which set of plunderers turned the scales at the election, since neither of them would vote or subscribe a sixpence to dig out the Pharaohs; and candidates and their agents, to say nothing of fighting lords, were making and breaking promises at the height of their voices from cock-crow to midnight. It was worse than the welshers' ring at Epsom on Derby Day, and when Professor Glidders had written to the papers to say that he wished the whole tedious pack were submerged in Phlegethon, and that funds were wanted badly for the work in the Valley of the Nile, he took himself out of the unholy racket.

A friend whom he met at Victoria Station asked him what and where was Phlegethon.

'Oh, you go and vote for somebody,' said Professor Glidders.

As for getting money out of the public for any Egyptological purpose, the Professor knew that he might as well have proposed to open a fund at the Mansion House to promote communication with Mars; but this did not improve his temper.

When he reached Cairo, he began to be more charitably disposed towards the race, though he disliked hotels. The proprietor knew him very well, and tried to make much of him; but the head waiter told the tourists privately that they had better not show the Professor any of the mess which the dealers had sold them as antiquities.

'You see,' said the head waiter, 'Profess' Gleedair, he know hall abaht zem sing. He tell you ze common pipple mek zem zairse'f. W'at you give for zem sing? Pouf! Well, don' you tell Profess' Gleedair!'

So the active trippers who had picked up cheap papyri, flint tools, bracelets, statuettes, slabs of granite with hieroglyphs, rag dolls made by Miriam to keep Moses quiet in the bulrushes, and other relics with pedigrees dating back to the preceding summer,

which the down-trodden natives manufactured for a living, took pains to avoid speech with the Professor, and wished he had stayed at home to help in the general election.

'Well, which *is* the Professor, *anyhow*?' asked, at *table d'hôte*, an American lady who, with her family, had been exploring tombs and temples at the rate of a dozen a day, being in a hurry to return to Paris.

'Voilà, madame! You got some fine ol' papyrus, or slab granite to shaw 'im? Profess' Gleedair know hall abaht zem sing,' said the head waiter.

'No, I guess that isn't he. You don't say! What, that little sandy chap with spectacles? Well! How's that, girls? Doesn't he look just fresh from school?'

'Ze Professor is zirty-two, madame. Me, I am zirty-nine; we are abaht ze sem ej. Profess' Gleedair is nephew of Milord Driscoll.'

'Say, girls, have we ever met Lord Driscoll?' asked mamma.

'I guess not, Ma,' responded the eldest daughter.

'Well, Scud, you'd better ask his nephew to look at our papyrus. He might come out and dig some in Ohio when he's quit digging Egypt,' said the lady to her husband.

'Likely not, my dear; and, what's more, I don't see any signs of a marrying man on that Professor,' answered Mr. Scudwell Chancey calmly.

Most of the hotel guests found the Professor rather alarming. He had a habit, when he bounced into the dining-room of an evening, of glaring round the table through his spectacles, with an air of inquiring whether any tourists had been rifling tombs, or hacking statues, or scraping their names on the walls of temples during the day. Simple tourists of inquiring minds who put elementary questions to him concerning his work got short commons and cold for answer. He used to be asked how he chose a site for excavation, by people who supposed that he went prodding over the desert with a wand, like a spiritist medium prospecting for a well; whether, when he had found a site, he began digging at the top or at the bottom; why he didn't blow out a pyramid with gunpowder or dynamite; what kind of razor Joseph shaved with; and why the Hittites wore pig-tails.

Professor Glidders snuffed up the air of the desert impatiently, and pushed on with his preparations. But he was not an ogre to everybody. If anyone talked of a scarab, a stele, a cartouche, or an enchorial inscription, and showed that he knew what he meant,

the Professor let a smooth glance fall on him, and spoke encouragingly. Parties whom a dragoman led by the nose he had no patience with. He asked whether Egypt had survived twelve centuries of oppression to become a tea-garden for tourists.

There are three Egypts at this day: the Egypt of the politicians—that unprofitable swarm; the Egypt of the active tripper; and the Egypt of the archæologist. This last, the cradle of civilisation, was the Egypt of Professor Glidders. He lived a long way back—his age, in his scientific capacity, was about four thousand years. He traversed easily the dusty cycles that are between us and the first Hyksos dynasty. The mummied Pharaohs of the eighteenth and nineteenth dynasties were his fathers, and his brothers, and his womankind. Luxurious, purposeless trippers, who pottered after dancing-girls and dervishes, were troubled by his aggressive energy of manner, his unconciliatory speech, his air of Police Inspector-General over all aimless wanderers amid the awful ruins. He looked so boyish, and was such a bit of a chap, with his close-shorn sandy hair; but his blue eyes twinkled threateningly through his gold spectacles. His voice, though he so often laid it to vehement words, was distinctly pleasant. Mrs. Chancey thought it probable that he had been unfortunate with a girl, and said so to her eldest daughter. Miss Chancey ‘guessed the Professor hadn’t been any girl’s beau up to now.’

Fladgate, the one-eyed Special Correspondent, who was writing up excavations for a London daily, came to stay at the hotel a day or two before the Professor was to start for the desert. He fraternised all round, and the *table d’hôte* liked him much better than it did the Professor. Fladgate, however, told the *table d’hôte* not to make any mistake about the Professor. He said that Europe hadn’t his equal as an Egyptologist, which was a little on the left side of facts, but Fladgate saw that the tourists in that hotel were disinclined to give Professor Glidders his due.

‘That’s real interesting, sir,’ said Mrs. Chancey; ‘and I’m told he has an uncle in the Peerage.’

‘Oh, old Driscoll!’ said Fladgate, and laughed.

He went on to relate how Glidders had enriched the Ghizeh and the British Museums during the past five years; what a fortune he might have made if he had worked for his private gains, and how his opinion on a doubtful article or a crabbed inscription was valued by Egyptologists.

'I hope to gracious Ma won't fool Pa into showing him our papyrus,' said Miss Chancey to herself.

'And Lord Driscoll, does he dig any, sir?' asked Mrs. Chancey.

'What, old Driscoll!' said Fladgate, and laughed again.

'Why no,' said Mr. Chancey. 'Being a peer, he nat'rally wouldn't feel any call that way. I saw one of these lords on a street corner in London once, and asked him the way somewhere, just to hear what he'd talk like; but he didn't seem to have the lay of the streets much. I reckon he didn't have occasion to.'

'There's a titled lady digging out here somewhere,' observed Miss Chancey.

'Is that so, sir?' inquired Mrs. Chancey of Fladgate.

'Oh yes. Lady Plaston is superintending excavations near Bubastis.'

'I don't say that's not so,' observed Mr. Chancey. 'She, maybe, married the title.'

'No; an aristocrat by birth,' said Fladgate. 'One of our oldest families, if you're interested that way.'

'Say, girls, would you like to dig some?' asked Mrs. Chancey with animation.

'My gracious, Ma! You said at breakfast you guessed we'd about used up this old cemetery,' plumped out Miss Chancey the younger.

Professor Glidders, who sprang into the room at that moment, with his customary manner of a detective raiding a baccarat club, caught this naive remark, and the *table d'hôte* expected something volcanic.

Mr. Chancey screened his face behind his table napkin, and murmured 'Great Gilgal!' purple with suppressed enjoyment.

Mrs. Chancey, whatever her feelings may have been, showed an unmoved countenance. 'Well,' she said, 'if Egypt *isn't* a cemetery, right there and back, I'd like any person to tell me *what* it is;' and she fixed Professor Glidders with a challenging eye.

'Madam,' responded the Professor, to the mute astonishment of the *table d'hôte*, 'you are absolutely right.'

Mrs. Chancey swept the table with a victorious glance, and drew a silent breath of relief.

'Jooly,' said the younger Miss Chancey to her sister after dinner, 'didn't you expect the Professor would have scorched Ma?'

'I guess Ma 'll scorch you, miss, if you give her away that sort again,' replied Miss Julia sweetly.

It was later in the evening, and Fladgate was smoking a well-cured cutty in the garden, and the Professor, who never smoked, was denouncing the wretched edict of the Government under which the natives are tempted to sell stolen or smuggled antiquities to private collectors which ought to find their way to the museums.

'Allow me,' said Fladgate, removing his pipe, as Miss Chancey strolled that way. 'Mr. Glidders—Miss Chancey.' Fladgate moved away.

'You're quitting Cairo, sir, I b'lieve,' said Miss Chancey. She was a tall, full-figured girl, of four or five and twenty, with black glowing eyes, black hair swept back from her forehead, and a complexion of ivory, which lost nothing under any sky. She spoke the tongue of the Americans with a relish, as it seemed, for her accent was Transatlantic to a degree, and she was not careful to moderate it. Withal, she was a sparkling girl, and had a bold and merry lip.

'Yes, I make tracks for the desert to-morrow,' said the Professor, in his crisp, emphatic tones.

'Far from here, Professor?'

'Not a great way; about twenty miles. Going to try a site I marked out last time I was here.'

'Going to camp there long, Professor?'

'Couldn't say, Miss Chancey. Weeks, at any rate; a quarter of a year, perhaps.

'Lonesome?'

'Oh dear no! Busy all the while as a bone-setter on a battlefield.'

'Well now! Have a real good time then, I expect, sir?'

'Rather, Miss Chancey! It's the most exciting work in the world.'

'Fancy! I'd like to see it.'

'Well, what's to prevent? If you have any interest in it, I should be happy to show you. Strap a tent and a cooking-stove on a donkey and you're in marching order.'

'Why, it'd be just splendid! I'm yellow sick of following our dragoman around. There's Ma to bring along, though; and donkey-back isn't her style a great deal. . . . I guess you don't live hotel ways out yonder, Professor?'

'Not much, Miss Chancey. If you eling to the flesh-pots, I can't recommend you to come.'

'Oh, *I* can dine off beans! I'm thinking of Ma. Say, how do you fix up out there? Professor.'

'Well, you can live in a tent, or a tomb. I prefer a tomb. It's cool in warm weather and warm in cold.'

'Do the Pharaohs have ghosts?'

'I haven't been lucky enough to see one.'

'I guess Ma wouldn't be curious to. Do you think I could dig any, Professor?'

'You wouldn't care about it. But it isn't all digging.'

'What besides, for a change?'

'Well, I've sat all day up to my nose in water, shoving coffins about—for a change.'

Miss Chancey laughed. 'I like you, Professor,' she said. Glidders bowed gravely.

'I don't mean that, either,' said Miss Chancey, whose eye was pretty quick. 'I mean, I like your go. You've got some razzle-dazzle. . . . I s'pose you're about winding up by this time? Seems they've been digging out here a pretty long while.'

'What, near the end of the work? We haven't much more than started on it. So far, we have learned rather more of our ignorance than of our knowledge. As far back as we have got, the beginning seems more remote than ever. The earliest history we have arrived at out here, with all our diggings, shows us a civilisation elaborate and all but perfect—combined labour, architecture, sculpture, weaving, dyeing; a developed literature, and luxuries without end. Now, that is something to have discovered, Miss Chancey; but it isn't enough. We want to reach the beginning of things. We want to know how and from what all this civilisation arose. That's the task of the future, and not a small one.'

'Well, I don't doubt it's worth doing, Professor, anyway. I like to hear you talk about it, and I'd like to see you digging. I guess I'll consider myself asked to your camp—you said so, didn't you?'

'Oh yes. Come by all means if you really want to see something of the work; I shall be pleased to meet you there.'

'That's fixed, then. I'll have Ma and Pa out there, if it takes Cook and a caravan to bring them.'

The Professor trailed off from the hotel next day, and to the active trippers it was as if the schoolmaster had taken a holiday. Mrs. Chancey, however, had bettered her opinion of him, and was

minded to think that he knew more of the real Egypt than she had fancied. 'If he'd put in another day I'd have showed him our papyrus, Scud,' she remarked. 'That papyrus cost you four hundred dollars.'

'I didn't waunt that paypyrus to any great extent, my dear; and I'd just as livs the Professor didn't pro-nounce upon it. Seemed to me the dealer that traded it to us had quite a number of 'em on hand, and I reckon that four-hundred dollar paypyri, if they're genuïne, an't a drug in the market at present.'

'Well, you'll think more of it framed and hung up out home, I guess.'

'We haven't any professors in that line of business Ohio way, my dear, that's a fact,' said Mr. Chancey.

'Sho!' said Mrs. Chancey. 'I wish I'd had the Professor look at it. The Professor was talking quite a long while with Jooly last night; did you know that? Wants us to go excavating in the desert.'

'So's he don't waunt to trade any paypyri, I don't mind.'

'How you talk about paypyri! He doesn't trade any. Say, François, what store do they sell tents at here?'

'I tell you hall abaht zem sing, madame, one haf minnit,' replied the head waiter, passing with a tray. 'I got a nice a-leetle shop of me hown.'

Professor Glidders at this time was faring by sandy ways towards his chosen site. His little caravan had joined him, and he went in the midst of his chattering Arabs and negroes (men, boys, and girls), the first of whom had their picks and shovels, and over whom he lorded it more genially than he had comported himself in the hotel. Sometimes, when he chose to walk instead of riding donkey-back, the youngsters in the rear screamed at him, 'O bankrupt foreigner!' forgetting, in their delight at the chance of being saucy, that he was paymaster to the whole tribe; and occasionally, when they had a quarrel amongst themselves, they set up an irrelevant shout of 'O Nazarene!' but in general, Glidders and his fellahin were on the best of terms. The Arab in authority is a tyrant, a schemer, and a grasper; under rule, he is submissive, and kisses with every appearance of gusto the hand that governs him. Glidders's five-feet six did not tolerate the smallest infringement of his little code of rules, an inflexibility of principle which experience had taught him; for in matters of import the Arab must be made obedient to the letter, and in matters indifferent he

is miserable if left a choice. But Glidders regarded his fellahin kindly, and with a depth of interest that they knew not of; for he looked to a day when the Egyptians should re-possess, and be great in, the land of the Ramessides.

Blessed to his sight, when at length the caravan stayed over against it, was the ring of sandy mounds with a strong depression in the centre, which was the spot he had marked out for his work. The form of the mounds, and the depression in the middle, told him that here was some temple or great solid building, with the ruins of houses around it. As every excavator is aware, there are ruins and ruins; the man with a genius for this work, using his imagination, backed by the knowledge that practice gives, guesses by the contour of the ground what he will find beneath it. Glidders never went to work at haphazard. No random digging; no picking at a site of which the possible treasures lay too deep beneath the ground for his purse to reach them. For him, a practicable and ordered plan, all thought out beforehand. The Arabs sent up a shout when the Professor pointed to the goal of their little march. Glidders shouted with his Arabs; the ring of sandy mounds and the hollow in the middle meant more to him than to them. The Arabs had begun to finger the backsheesh for their finds—so much for this find, so much more for that. But Glidders thought: 'To-morrow or next week there will only be a spade's breadth between me and another Pharaoh!'

Within a stone's cast of the mounds was a small tomb which he had uncovered the season before, and here—not in the sepulchre itself, but in the upper chamber where the Egyptian had fed his ancestors with offerings—Glidders established himself. In here he brought his precious implements, his theodolite and plumb-lines, his measuring-rods, his bevelling instrument, his threads and his wax; his provision tins, his articles of canteen, and his blankets. A little way off the Arabs were squatted. They lit their cooking-fires. A great moon arose, and from beneath the tramplings of thirty centuries the Pharaonic past came forth again, tumultuous and splendid. A hum of voices stirred over the dumb desert, great palaces were reared beside the silent ruins, long aisles of statues, and rows of public buildings, temples, courts, granaries, arsenals, and libraries. Under the master-architect an army of slaves built up a pyramid for the king and queen, laying it out with astonishing skill, dressing the granite courses to a fine equality, levelling the casing perfectly. Priests, nobles, soldiers

with horned and crested helmets, ministers of State, and the swarm of Pharaoh's servants came and went. Streets and markets were busy and noisy. The Pharaoh rode out in a chariot covered with plates of gold, and his people bowed to the earth as he passed. The stones of Rome had not been laid when all this was, and Athens was not yet a town.

On the following day the site was commenced upon. Pits were first made about one edge of it, to find how far the ruins extended. Next, a great trench was dug all along one side, which was gradually swept across the whole site, and Glidders began to get at his temple. Adjoining it were the ruins of a great tomb. It promised to be a rich field, with labour for many weeks.

A kind of mystery attaches to the work of excavation which all who share in it are conscious of. The mist of romance hovers over the region of the underground. For the hired digger, there is the excitement of the sportsman, the spice of uncertainty which attends the treasure-seeker and the gambler. There is all this for the excavator himself, with the addition of an intellectual and a moral aim. He brings up from their tombs of granite the renowned dead of an age prodigiously remote. He brings them back almost like life itself. It was for him that the embalmer used all his fantastic arts, pouring in drugs, powder of myrrh and cassia, salting the body, wrapping it in bands of fine linen, with gums smeared on the inner side. Thus were they to lie, in their solid sepulchres, with their funereal images and vessels about them, their inscriptions and their ornaments, and the records of their doings; silently there, through the revolutions of a hundred generations; and then be carried up again into the day, that we might look upon their faces, and have familiar knowledge of them. We have seen the very face of the Pharaoh who drove Moses out from his presence; that terrible, old, white-haired warrior, builder, and friend of literature, great in height, and great in bodily strength, with long slender hands and feet, like his handsome father, Seti. The teeth which he ground in his wrath against the God of the Hebrews were white and well preserved three thousand years after he had ceased to gnash with them.

At the end of ten days Glidders's operations were well toward, and his scientific heart was glad within him. He sat at the entrance to his tomb in the quiet of the evening; he had washed himself, and was drinking tea out of a blue-glazed bowl of the thirteenth dynasty, which that day's digging had turned up.

Empires—unfashioned then—had become as tales that are told since last that bowl was drained.

The Professor had very cheerfully forgotten the Cairo hotel, and the active trippers therein congregated.

Over the desert a donkey came pricking, with a person on its back, and Glidders raised his head at the cry of the donkey-boy, urging the little beast on in shrill Arabic. 'Son of a dog! Son of a pig! Son of a stingy tourist!' piped the donkey-boy.

As they came nearer, Glidders saw that the donkey carried a lady, whose costume was European. 'Whew! It's the girl who likes my razzle-dazzle!' he ejaculated.

'Son of a dog! Son of a pig! Son of a swearing tourist!' screamed the donkey-boy to the donkey.

'Well, and how are you pro-gressing, sir?' asked Miss Julia, as she alighted from her donkey. 'I do hope you haven't towed out Pharaoh yet. Guess you'd forgotten us, eh? But we've come along. I left Ma and Pa camping way out there, about two miles. We didn't rightly know where you'd fixed till we saw your people's fires, and then I thought I'd come across and see if I couldn't fetch you back to supper. My! how you've been digging!'

'Yes, we don't lead hotel-life in these parts, Miss Chancey. Happy to see you at my camp. Supper? Well, I'm finishing mine, thank you. Won't *you* have some? I trust Mrs. Chancey bore the journey well. That's plum jam at your elbow, there are sardines and tinned salmon in the coffin behind you. May I fetch them? I can get you something hot from the Arabs, if you prefer it.'

'Thank you, Professor. I guess a bite of cofined salmon would suit this occasion sweetly. Say, who was the patriarch that owned this coffin?'

'I am sorry to say I cannot tell you. We found it to-day, and I had it fetched in here for the present. Some plunderer had made his way into the tomb before me and rifled the coffin. I hope to find the cartouche to-morrow—at least, I mean to have a warm hunt for it. Excuse me, you know what a cartouche is?'

'If you'd said a papyrus, now, I'd have chimed in,' said Miss Chancey.

'Oh, but you may find a cartouche in a papyrus,' said Glidders. 'It's a sort of oval figure that we find on old Egyptian monuments, and in papyri. In this figure there are groups of

characters that express the names or titles of kings or queens—sometimes, but not often, of deities. That's a cartouche. But you know a papyrus, eh ?'

'Oh, yes, sir ; we've got one.'

'Ah !' said the Professor, rather drily. 'I—I hope you didn't pay too much for it.'

'Well, it cost Pa four hundred dollars.'

'Four hundred dollars ? Eighty pounds ! H'm !'

'That's the way Pa talks about it,' said Miss Chancey.

'Yes, I daresay. If your father bought a papyrus for eighty pounds, Miss Chancey, I should venture to guess that it is worth rather more, or a good deal less, than that. I should like to see it.'

'Ma's just dying to show it to you.'

'She shall do so. May I hand you the jam again ?'

'No, I thank you, sir. I expect I should be going.'

'You must come to-morrow and see us at work. I shall take you back to your tents, if you please.'

'Will you ?' said Miss Chancey. 'That's kind. They'll be glad to see you.'

She remounted her steed without assistance, and the donkey-boy, having made the discovery that the 'Nazarene' spoke Arabic as well as he did, restricted himself to conventional epithets.

'Here's Jooly,' said Mrs. Chancey, as the procession approached the Chancey encampment, 'and she's got the Professor with her.'

'He looks nicer out of his store clothes,' said the younger Miss Chancey. 'I shouldn't wonder but Jooly's got a beau.'

'Well, don't you get firing off any nonsense about anything,' said her mother. 'I don't know but you'd better go to bed. Times and times I feel like getting up and shaking you ; you do fix people up so.'

'How you talk, Ma ! Why didn't you send me for a year's schooling in Paris ?' replied the young lady.

'You'd fix up all Paris, you would,' said her mother. 'Scud, where's that papyrus ? See here, Scud, I'd like you to talk real nice and smart to the Professor. You *can* talk some, Scud ; but don't to gracious say you wished you hadn't bought that papyrus.'

'My dear,' replied Mr. Chancey, 'as I've remarked before, I don't see any signs of a marrying-man on that Professor.'

The Professor proved much more sociable in the desert than he had done in the hotel, and before he set out to return to his sepulchre he asked for a sight of the papyrus.

Mr. Chancey, not without misgivings, produced and handed it to him. Professor Glidders's eye sparkled as he glanced it over. Then he sighed. 'This should have found its way to the museum,' he said.

'Then it's no hum, sir?' asked Mr. Chancey.

'Certainly not. A very fine specimen. Part of it is missing, but it is worth at least double what you gave for it.'

'So, sir?' exclaimed Mr. Chancey. 'Been some men, now, they'd have waunted to set up in the papyrus line to-morrow.'

'Well, who *got* you to show it, Scud?' asked Mrs. Chancey.

'Just so, my dear. What I was goin' to say.'

'You must do something with it, you know,' said Glidders. 'Can't waste a precious piece of work like this. Now, you have an Egyptian museum of your own in Boston.'

'Come to think of it, Professor, so we have. Well, I'll present it, I shouldn't wonder.'

'You couldn't do a more excellent thing,' said Glidders, greatly relieved. 'You see, my dear sir, these things are scarcely to be regarded as travellers' knick-knacks, to be picked up by some happy chance—at whatever cost—and carried home to show to people to whom they would only mean that you had spent a season in Egypt. They are of really priceless value to the archæologist, and if our fatuous Government, which hasn't a thought in the world beyond winning its silly elections, were to insist upon a fair price being paid by its officials in open market for all finds brought there, there would be no smuggling, no cutting up of valuable finds into pieces, to be sold in separate portions as specimens. I should like to know, for instance, where is the remainder of this splendid papyrus of yours. However, you are going to give your portion to Boston, Mr. Chancey. You couldn't do better.'

'I guess this little digger knows his business,' said Mrs. Chancey to herself.

'Jooly,' said the younger sister, when they were retiring, 'did the Professor seem to like walking beside your donkey, when you were coming home donkey-back?'

'He didn't let on much if he did,' said Miss Julia.

'Is he a nice sort of man to come home donkey-back with when there's a moon out, Jooly?'

'Oh, I guess he isn't your sort of a nice man.'

'Didn't have any candies in his old sepulchre, did he?'

'Oh, you! *Candies*—no! Go to sleep. There's plum jam, though.'

'Say, Jooly, wasn't I awful good and proper to-night?'

'Oh, yes.'

'Well, I don't know how long it's going to last. You'd better go right on with your Professor while I'm on my store behaviour, before I've time to frighten him. Ma ought to have sent *me* to school to Paris, too.'

'Go to sleep, stupid. A nice little kangaroo *you'd* have been in a school in Paris. Oh! quit pinching me, will you!'

'When we get out of this old dust-heap I'm going to have a beau of my own. I don't want any more folks telling me to go to bed and sleep. I'm sixteen now.'

On the morning after this, Miss Chancey was early on the scene of Professor Glidders's operations, but the workers were already hard at it; diggers in the pits and trenches, basket-carriers bearing away the earth as it was thrown up, and Glidders skipping here and there, with a grasshopper's agility. A gang of native porters, in a harness of ropes, had just hauled out a great carved block, and girls with sponges and bowls were standing ready to wash it down. The variety of the scene bewildered Miss Chancey, and she began to feel the infectious excitement of the work.

'Have you found the old man's cartouche?' she inquired.

'Not yet. I thought you might like to accompany me in a hunt for it.'

'I guess I just would.'

'Very well, I'm quite ready to start. Please follow me; here is an entrance to the tomb; we had no end of trouble to find it the day before yesterday.'

They passed through a square, clean-cut hole in a wall opposite to them, and commenced, what seemed to Miss Chancey, an interminable journey through narrow passages and twisting tunnels, cumbered with chips, and sand, and fallen masonry.

'I reckon this was a squeeze for Pharaoh's funeral,' said Miss Chancey, as she stooped to pass under a low arch.

'Oh, they didn't bring him in this way,' said Glidders. 'I haven't found the chief passage yet. They took all this trouble to preserve his majesty safe from spoilers.'

'Well, they didn't calc'late *we* might want to visit him. Say, where are we now, Professor?'

The explorers had descended a passage, at the end of which a

flight of steps led into a chamber from which apparently there was no exit. Glidders indicated a sliding trap-door, through which another chamber was reached at a higher level, and on they went again. Glidders's eyes were everywhere, and he was continually stooping and raking amongst the rubbish heaps that obstructed their course. 'You wouldn't believe,' he said, 'how important it is to turn over every inch of stuff.'

Miss Chancey said she expected so, and indulged in a very small yawn behind the Professor's back.

'We might come upon some treasure of an amulet, or a gold bracelet, or some delightful little carved ornament, anywhere about here.'

'My! Why didn't you say so?' exclaimed Miss Chancey, falling to with the point of her sunshade upon a heap of chips and earth at her feet.

'Ha! ha! You've found it! You've found it!' shouted Glidders; and he danced and screamed with delight as he drew out of the heap a fragment of discoloured stone which Miss Chancey had uncovered with her foot, and on which he showed, amid a mass of hieroglyphs, the oval figure of the cartouche.

Glidders sank upon his knees—before the hieroglyph. He passed his hand over it reverently; he blew the dust from it; his gaze seemed to grow into the mystic oval.

'My dear Miss Chancey,' he said at length. 'What a fortunate find! You really ought to feel very proud. Is it not a perfect cartouche?'

Miss Chancey did her best to look enthusiastic.

'Come,' said Glidders, 'we must carry out this jewel at once. Would you like to hold it for a moment?'

Mr. and Mrs. Chancey, with their youngest daughter, were waiting for them at the entrance. They were to lunch with the Professor in his sepulchre.

'Well, Jooly,' said Mrs. Chancey, while Glidders was displaying the cartouche to the others, 'you've had quite a nice long time in there. Anything come of it?'

'Why, yes, Ma. We've found Pharaoh's cartouche.'

'Oh!' said Mrs. Chancey, 'have you, Jooly? Then' (in a tone of somewhat severe significance) 'I expect it's time we went back to Paris.'

Miss Chancey had been of the same opinion for the last five minutes.

JANUARY DAYS IN CEYLON.

I.

COLOMBO.

THROUGH the brilliant moonlight of a tropical night the little steamer *Aska*, laden with cows, Tamil coolies, and a few European passengers, ploughs her way across the stormy Gulf of Manaar to Ceylon, that fairest 'Pearl of the East,' set in a sapphire ring of Indian seas. Five miles of shallow but turbulent water, through which a steam launch dives and plunges, lie between Tuticorin and the vessel which waits beyond the bar. At length the drenched and dripping cabin passengers are hoisted up the lurching gangway, while the frightened but pugnacious coolies tumble in pell-mell through an open hatchway, their shrieks and quarrels only quelled by the liberal application of a stout stick to their bare brown shoulders by a muscular native steward. Some of the combatants tumble into the foaming water, and being forcibly prevented from going on board swim back disconsolately to the launch as it gets up steam for the return journey. Babies scream and kick, women and girls weep bitterly, as they waft frantic farewells to the distant shore, and a cow breaks loose from her moorings and plunges madly round the decks, pursued by a score of brown figures with wild war-whoops and waving arms. When comparative peace is restored we settle down amid bag and baggage on the upper deck for a twenty hours' passage, which seems an interminable nightmare of horrors. The fearful tossing of the top-heavy boat in the January monsoon, the appalling groans of the crowded coolies, and the dismal lowing of the cattle, together with the discomfort caused by the miserable appointments of the steamer, combine to render the little voyage a pandemonium or manifold torture. My own lot is mitigated by the loan of a deck chair and a pillow from a kindly young officer of the ship; but my less favoured companions are reduced to the bare boards of the deck as their only couch through the long hours of misery which intervene from port to port.

At length hope revives, and life again seems worth living, as the purple mountains of Ceylon loom on the horizon and the lofty

cone of Adam's Peak soars into the deep-blue sky. The wind, which travels a hundred miles in a breath, fans us with the fragrance of tropical flowers and the pungent aroma of mace and cinnamon, for the 'spicy breezes' of Ceylon are no poetical myth, but a well-authenticated fact. Forests of cocoa-nut palms fringe the coast with feathery crowns bending beneath a golden weight of clustering fruit, the great green fronds sweeping down in graceful curves to the violet rim of the sunlit sea. The *Aska* anchors within the noble breakwater of Colombo, where the bent spars of outrigger canoes flit about among huge steamers, and crowds of catamarans, the native boats, made of hollowed tree-trunks, surround us, paddled by brown figures who gesticulate wildly in order to attract our attention. Resisting their entreaties we select a flat boat with an awning, and two sturdy Cingalese row us to the shore of this earthly paradise, invested with a double charm by contrast with the purgatory which has preceded it. Past the red houses and towers of tree-shaded streets lined with glittering bazaars, and thronged with gaily-clad crowds, we drive along Galle Face, that loveliest of sea promenades, with the huge rollers of the Indian Ocean breaking into foam at our feet. Our powers of enjoyment are for the moment in abeyance, and even the flaming sunset, which transmutes sea and sky into radiant plains of molten gold, wins but a listless admiration, for the luxurious repose of the palm-shaded hotel at the edge of the waves is the modest goal of our present ambition.

Colombo is the marine junction of the world, and the different lines converging here as in a focus render the commercial metropolis of Ceylon a cosmopolitan rather than a Cingalese city. The busy streets glow with dazzling colour and frame perpetually changing pictures of that brilliant Oriental life which to those unfamiliar with it appears a dream of Arabian Nights rather than a tangible reality of ordinary experience. The various races which jostle each other in street and bazaar partake of the cosmopolitan character which belongs in a certain degree to the whole island, though more especially to Colombo. Effeminate-looking Cingalese with glossy braids of black hair fastened by huge tortoiseshell combs, wander about in smart jackets and striped skirts of native cloth. The dress of the women is almost identical with that of the men, though sometimes varied by a low white muslin bodice and a string of coral, replaced in the higher classes by sparkling circlets of rubies or sapphires on dusky necks and arms.

Moormen, descended from ancient Arab traders who migrated hither from Red Sea ports, and distinguishable by their voluminous red or white robes and tall hats glittering with tinsel, smoke their narghilehs in dim arcades filled with gorgeous silks and delicate embroideries. Malays with flat Mongolian features and dull-blue garb drive a brisk trade in the artistically woven cloth and cotton of their native peninsula. Stolid Bombay merchants and keen-faced Jews with long black ringlets preside over stores of shining gems; for this favoured island, together with the pearl fisheries of the western coast, possesses the further treasure of inexhaustible sapphire-mines, and the minor wealth of tourmalines, moonstones, and garnets. The rubies and emeralds of Burma and Siam, which appear plentiful as the native jewels, are received in exchange for the splendid sapphires, and the rare specimens of alexandrite and jacinth obtained from the quarries of Ratnapura, famous for unique crystallisations which rank amid the phenomena of Nature. The most valuable sapphires are of a deep velvety blue, unchanged by artificial light, but the scale of colour runs from palest azure to darkest indigo. Sapphires of faint pink hue are highly prized, and the green sapphire has obtained a well-deserved popularity, but gems of white and yellow lustre are comparatively worthless. The semi-transparent asterias, or star sapphire, of blue-grey tint, shows a five-pointed star radiating in fine white veins from the centre of the stone. The abundant tourmalines glow with rich hues of straw colour, amber, and brown, varied occasionally by a brilliant green, gems of this colour being locally designated as 'green diamonds;' but the rare alexandrite, pale green by day and changing to lustrous crimson under artificial light, is the most exquisite of Cingalese jewels. Sparkling cinnamon stones, their ruddy brown shot with orange, are also local specialities; and the delicate moonstone, so called from the azure crescent which shimmers through the opalescent pallor of every perfect specimen, is indigenous to the island.

With difficulty we tear ourselves away from the mysterious fascination of the sparkling jewels, possessing that magnetic attraction for the feminine mind which Goethe realised when he placed them in the hand of Mephistopheles as an irresistible temptation. Coolies who only add a supplementary red handkerchief to the brown suit with which Nature provides them, draw the rickshaws which seem the favourite vehicles of Ceylon, and white bullocks trot past harnessed to scarlet carts laden with brightly-clad natives,

English soldiers in white uniform and sun helmet ride prancing chargers on the green 'Maidan' before the barracks, and fashionable carriages drive up and down Galle Face, filled with elegantly-dressed Europeans and the more gaudily-attired burghers who belong to the Dutch and Portuguese stock, which by Cingalese inter-marriage became incorporated with the original population.

A few expeditions in rickshaw and bullock bandy suffice for the exploration of Colombo, which owes its modern importance to the crowded shipping ever passing to and from this connecting link in the intersecting chains of international commerce. The bazaars with their local curios of ebony and sandal-wood, porcupine quills and woven grass, surpass those of the Indian peninsula in variety and beauty. The extensive Pettah, or native town, glows with kaleidoscopic colouring, and the English cathedral in a shady close adds a touch of home association to the unfamiliar aspect of the shining East. Compulsory baptism during the Portuguese occupation added many so-called converts to the Roman Church, but most of these unwilling Christians reverted in after years to their original Buddhism, though the modern Roman mission numbers many faithful adherents. The supreme charm of the locality consists in the tropical verdure, which turns every rural lane and woodland vista into a bower of floral splendour. An artificial lake in the midst of the city tempers the burning rays of the equatorial sun, and the shadowy creeks under their canopy of palms are filled with floating water-lilies, pink, white, and blue. The aromatic cinnamon gardens scent the air, and every palm-thatched hut buries itself in a tangle of choicest exotics and a green nest of tropical verdure. The lazy *insouciance* of the people and the lavish bounty of Nature under equatorial skies contrast sharply with the stern environment of Northern poverty in a rigorous climate, where the earth appears as a hard taskmaster rather than a tender mother.

An expedition to Mount Lavinia is *de rigueur* with every visitor to Colombo. Picturesque bungalows and lovely gardens line the road for the first two miles, the deep verandahs and pillared porticoes mantled with the royal purple of Bougainvillea and the vivid colouring of unfamiliar tropical creepers. Stately palms rustle overhead, banana and india-rubber flap their broad green leaves in the spice-laden breeze, and ripening mangoes glow amid glossy foliage. The yellow canes of the giant bamboo gleam amid the pale green of the feathery leaves. Custard-apple and

boquat, rose-apple and pawpaw hang over every flowery hedge and tempt the thirsty traveller to pause and gather their cool and juicy fruits. Here and there a mighty banyan strikes the ground again and again with the curious trunks which grow downward from the end of every bough, and in their turn branch out into fresh foliage like a dozen trees in one. Mahogany and tulip tree, teak and touchwood, with a hundred unknown species, add to the variety of the tropical woods; and as we advance, the road penetrates the shadowy depths of an interminable forest of cocoanuts, with blue glimpses of the sea shining through their pillared stems. We pass bamboo-roofed villages, their open stalls filled with mounds of pine-apples, and the overhanging eaves laden with huge bunches of yellow bananas. Gaily-clad girls tie up this most plentiful of fruits in neat parcels with its own great leaves, or pour out the tea, which is now the universal beverage of Ceylon, while they chat merrily with the native wayfarers who halt for the simple refreshment.

Mount Lavinia is the site of a large hotel above the Indian Ocean, which bursts in foam and thunder among the rocks and caverns below the green promontory. The shadow of the tall grey house, and the background of waving palms, render the spot an oasis of perpetual coolness in this sun-steeped land. A delicious breeze blows from the sea; fishermen mend their nets on the golden sands of the palm-fringed bay, and catamarans dart in and out of the rocky creeks. A small brown boy swarms up a lofty tree to gather fresh cocoa-nuts, and we recline in *dolce far niente* fashion on long bamboo chairs, sipping iced cocoa-nut water, while we revel in the glorious sunset light which streams over the purple ocean as the flaming disc sinks below the waves.

The return to Colombo by moonlight, a few hours later, is the loveliest experience of all. The breeze has died away, and the forest of palms is motionless as though carved in ebony. The full moon fringes the dark fronds with silver, and gleams with mellow lustre on the polished stems which pencil interlacing shadows on the shining grass. Fire-flies sparkle in the dusky glades, lighting up a world of mystery with their galaxies of glittering stars. The little villages are wrapped in silence and sleep, though here and there a dark form raises itself from a grass mat at the sound of the horse's hoofs. Our seven miles' progress through the scene of enchantment is all too short, for dawn, sunset, and moonlight, are the three conditions which glorify this

tropical Eden with a halo of unearthly beauty. In the deep seclusion of the outlying country lies the missionary station of Cotta, a centre of Christian work, with schools, church, and parsonage inclosed in a green garden. The warm welcome of the kindly missionary to this English home in a distant land, and the peaceful afternoon spent under his hospitable roof, is a bright episode of the sojourn in Colombo. The native converts maintained and educated at Cotta show a warm appreciation of their privileges, and the happy-looking girls who sing us familiar English hymns and native songs in musical Cingalese, gather round their good pastor with the unmistakable affection due to a tried and trusted friend. The deep repose of the rural scenery sinks into the heart, and we turn away with regret from the tranquil lake and shadowy woods, bidding a still more reluctant farewell to the kind and fatherly head of the English mission. Under the rose-flushed sky of earliest dawn we drive to a Buddhist temple outside the city. Not a leaf stirs in the glassy atmosphere, and the wayside flowers have not yet unclosed their dewy petals to the rising sun; the grey boughs and scarlet blossoms of the leafless cotton-tree rise in gorgeous pyramids of bloom above our heads, and gold mohur alternates with red poinsettia in a brilliant foreground to the unchanging green of the endless palms. Native women are laying their fragrant offerings of snowy temple flowers on Buddha's shrine. His gigantic red figure reclines at full length behind the altar, and weird frescoes depicting the manifold transmigrations of his soul decorate the walls, on which he appears in various forms, including those of a tiger and a hare. A yellow-robed priest acts as custodian of the temple, and notwithstanding his vow of poverty rattles an iron bowl with suspicious alacrity. The images of Brahma and Shiva, which flank the colossal Buddha, indicate that decadence of Buddhist creed which resulted from the influence of the Indian mainland on the purer doctrinal system.

Colombo is about to celebrate the arrival of the Archduke Ferdinand d'Este, heir to the Austro-Hungarian throne, and cart-loads of flowers and palms go past to decorate the quays. As the Austrian ironclad *Kaiserin Elisabeth* is expected on the following day, we resolve to precede his Imperial Highness to Kandy, where great festivities are to be observed in honour of the royal guest. A departure from Colombo is also rendered advisable by the setting in of a 'long-shore wind,' which, with its enervating effects, is one of the drawbacks to this equatorial paradise,

beautiful as a dream, but, like Eden of old, both in a literal and figurative sense, marked with the trail of the serpent.

II.

KANDY.

THE railway from Colombo to Kandy traverses a luxuriant plain overflowing with irrepressible verdure. Tobacco and sugar-cane wave in the wind, and the dark foliage of magnificent cocoa-nut palms accentuates the paler green of gigantic bananas and the vivid emerald of springing rice. Crossing and recrossing a romantic river, the train winds upward into the heart of the hills, and skirts steep precipices clad from base to summit with feathery ferns. Cocoa-nut forests sweep up to the edge of the fantastic rocks, and palms of every kind—areca and talipot, fan palm, oil palm, and sago—fringe the shadowy gorges which pierce the purple mountains, and wind away into an unknown region of glamour and mystery. The fluted columns of the graceful Palmyra palm form forest aisles in Nature's green cathedral, the bread-fruit tree waves serrated leaves among creaking bamboos and tall rattans, the scaly globes of the jak grow in golden excrescences from the rough bark, and the verdure of trailing creepers brightens with intermingled leaves of pure white and dazzling scarlet, as though even Nature's green robe caught fire from hidden depths of colour under the glow of tropic skies. As the grey crags rise in bolder outlines above the river, the high mountain ranges of Ceylon tower upward bathed in violet haze, and the unearthly radiance of the equatorial sunset suggests some magic vision of 'the light that never shone on land or sea.' The liquid amber of the sky flushes overhead into peach-like bloom of blended rose and lilac, and the tranquil river flows in a golden tide through the flower-wreathed valley. The train ascends into the cooler regions of the tea district, where the lower spurs of the mountains are covered with the green bushes and starry flowers of Ceylon's most valuable crop. Brown coolies are picking the young shoots, now in full 'flush' after a heavy shower. The tea-gatherers are all Tamils from the Indian coast, for the prosperous Cingalese refuse to work on tea estates, preferring to cultivate the strip of fertile land owned by almost every native. Darkness falls as we reach far-famed Kandy, the mountain capital of the ancient kings and a stronghold of barbaric cruelty almost within the memory of living men.

Ceylon, once known as Serandib, and earlier still as Taprobane, was visited by the Greeks and Romans, by Marco Polo, and by the early Portuguese navigators. After retaining possession of the island for a century and a half the Portuguese were expelled by the Dutch in A.D. 1656, and in 1796 the latter gave way to the British, who gradually extended their sway over the whole island, the subjugation of the native Kandyan kings being the last and most difficult feat accomplished by the victorious army. After establishing ourselves at the charming waterside hotel, we make the circuit of the moonlit lake by rickshaw. This picturesque sheet of water which fills the lovely valley is of artificial construction. An ancient Kandyan king, in order to cool the heated atmosphere of the mountain town situated in a basin of forest-clad hills, imprisoned the waters of a shallow river which flowed through the dale. A perforated stone terrace bounds the head of the lake, now encircled by a carriage drive under drooping cocoanuts and stately cabbage palms. The mystical beauty of the moonlight scene is heightened from the Upper Lake Road, where we look down through the luxuriant tropical vegetation to the shimmering water lying like a shield of silver amid the darkness of the surrounding hills. Stone pillars, washed by the rippling wavelets, support the ancient boat-house of the Kandyan kings, used as the present English library. The curling brown eaves and deep balconies of the particoloured building combine rustic simplicity with Oriental display. The remains of the royal palace, now occupied by Government offices, exhibit the same character in richly-carved wooden pillars and barbaric architecture, which reaches a climax of picturesque beauty in the adjacent Temple of the Tooth, the most famous of Buddhist shrines. At the first streak of dawn the temple band discourses weird and uncanny music on trombone, conch shell, and flageolet, summoning the faithful to prayer. After the morning sacrifice of flowers and music, the yellow-robed priest who strips the blossoms from their stems and lays them in lines upon the great silver altar, shows us the celebrated temple library in the beautiful octagon of striped brown and white stone which forms the most striking feature of the picturesque building. The sacred books are written with a stylus on leaves of the talipot palm, the gems of this famous collection being protected by covers of carved ebony mounted in solid silver. The intelligent young librarian, who understands English perfectly, displays with much pride Sir Edwin

Arnold's gift of a dried leaf from the celebrated peepul tree of Buddha-Gya, which waved its tremulous boughs over the head of the great Indian sage as he meditated on the mystic doctrines afterwards elaborated into the Buddhist creed. We return to the temple at a later hour to witness the reception of the Austrian Archduke, and to embrace the rare opportunity of seeing the Sacred Tooth of Buddha, seldom accessible to Europeans, but exhibited to-day in honour of the royal visit. Flags, flowers, and palms decorate the station where the Archduke and his suite are received by the Governor and to be escorted through Kandy by the native infantry and all available British troops. Triumphal arches span the streets leading to the temple, with waving palm branches, and fronds, split, peeled, and plaited in elaborate native style and intricate design. Baskets of gorgeous flowers hang from the open lattice-work of every arch, and a thousand fluttering pennons of red and yellow are suspended above the roads lined with rustic lamps of split cocoa-nut shells mounted on bamboo-stems for the evening illumination.

The Imperial guest is welcomed at the temple gate by the Kandyan chiefs, who, in accordance with an ancient Cingalese law, act as the lay custodians of the Sacred Tooth. Their broad hats of crimson velvet and gold embroidery blaze with strings and clasps of rubies and sapphires, every hat being surmounted by the towering golden badge of the wearer's race. Gorgeous jackets of red and gold brocade sparkle with the same precious gems, and the voluminous white petticoats of gold-embroidered muslin are tucked up in a huge bundle under a golden belt encrusted with emeralds and pearls. A jewelled dagger flashes at the side, and the brown hands are almost hidden by huge rings, like miniature suns, with rays of many-coloured gems surrounding the flaming disc of a great central ruby. The bearded faces of this barbaric aristocracy express a sense of overwhelming importance as they advance, surrounded by a native guard bearing glittering spears, curious leathern shields, and great fans of peacocks' feathers. Fortunately for my own share in the ceremony, curiosity overmasters dignity in one of the noble band, now a useful member of the island parliament, and he offers me a coign of vantage in the temple itself, after satisfying himself by a few preliminary questions that I shall not abuse this lofty privilege. Following his bundle of gorgeous petticoats up the stone stairs, I enter the inner court of the sacred edifice just as a long pro-

cession of Buddhist priests with yellow robes and shaven crowns emerges from the dusky arches of an adjacent cloister. Tone and texture are equally varied in the priestly garb, which includes every shade of primrose, amber, canary, and orange. The flowing garments, dyed with the juice of the jak tree and made of satin, serge, cloth, or calico, leave the right arm and shoulder uncovered. The left hand holds the great palm-leaf fan, which, together with an iron bowl for rice, constitutes the entire personal property of these dreamy ascetics, bound by a threefold vow of poverty, chastity, and obedience. The mystical and subjective doctrines of Buddhism, an ethical philosophy rather than a creed, are often materialised in popular practice by the introduction of Hindu rites and deities into the observances inculcated by the more visionary and speculative system. This religious degeneration resulted from the frequent intermarriages of Kandyan kings with Tamil princesses, who retained their own faith or grafted it upon the Buddhism which in some cases they were compelled to accept. The yawning gulf between the intellectual subtleties of Buddhist doctrine and the gross materialism to which Southern India reduces the mysteries of Brahminism was thus bridged over, and the multitude, ever preferring the seen to the unseen, readily adopted a compromise which appealed to the senses as well as to the soul.

Many intellectual and thoughtful faces are noticeable amid the crowd of Buddhist priests, monks, and novices present in the Temple of the Tooth. All ages are represented, from the venerable abbot of some historic monastery to the youthful neophyte just emerging from childhood. From earliest dawn the green paths of mountain and jungle have been thronged with the golden figures of these gentle 'brethren of the yellow robe,' assembling by hundreds to venerate the most precious relic of their ancient faith, and the ferry-boat from the monastery buried under the trees of the opposite shore has been in constant requisition, bearing a golden freight across the deep blue water. As the weird strains of thundering trombone and wailing flageolet sound in the distance, the countless priests form into two dazzling semicircles, divided by an intersecting aisle left free for the advancing procession. The frescoed walls and cavernous arches of the ancient temple emphasise the crescent-shaped masses of shaded yellow and the contrasting brown of shaven faces and naked arms. Stalls of votive flowers light up dim recesses with snowy bloom, and the rich fragrance of ironwood, champak, and frangipanni blossom struggles with the fumes of

camphor and the heavy odours of burning wax. At length, as the temple band rends the air with a wild burst of barbaric music, the procession files past, preceded by attendants bearing glittering fans and huge umbrellas of scarlet and gold. The Kandyan chiefs follow, their gorgeous costume enhanced by the addition of cloth of gold capes bristling with jewels. The young Archduke is supported on one side by the Governor of Ceylon and on the other by the abbot of the temple, a noble-looking man robed in rich yellow satin. Another crowd of attendants brings up the rear with a further array of fans, umbrellas, and heraldic badges glittering with gold and colour. The Imperial visitor, a quiet-looking young man in simple morning dress, appears somewhat embarrassed by the novelty of his surroundings as he passes within the massive silver door of the inner shrine, and on returning from the sanctum sanctorum of Buddhism he makes a speedy exit from the temple precincts. Owing to the kindness of the Kandyan magnate whose authority sanctions my presence, I join the first detachment of pilgrims, and ascend the corkscrew staircase to the turret which contains the shrine of the Tooth. Only one at a time can pass under the low-browed arch of the narrow doorway. The friendly chief and some yellow-robed 'chelas' mount guard within a silver railing, before a table draped with rich embroideries, and supporting a bell-shaped shrine of silver gilt, with costly draperies gleaming within its open door. Two smaller shrines are contained within this external casket. An outer one of gold set with lustrous rubies contains the actual reliquary of priceless emeralds, wherein the Sacred Tooth is suspended by a gold wire above the petals of a golden lotus. The discoloured ivory fang, an inch and a half in length, if authentic, must assuredly have belonged to Buddha during his incarnation as a tiger, one of the historical transmigrations experienced by his long-suffering soul. His miniature image is exhibited carved from a single emerald, presumably the largest in the world, and a less valuable figure of rock crystal is a triumph of skilful workmanship in archaic art. With difficulty we thread the dense crowd of natives who surround the temple, waiting with exemplary patience for what they consider an inestimable religious privilege.

At nightfall the long lines of lighted cocoa-nut lamps gleam softly on the broad green leaves and drooping grasses which border the temple roads and the woodland path to Government House. Native dancers, with tinselled breastplates and spangled scarves

glittering on their lithe brown bodies, twirl in wild gyrations before a Kandyan chief, whose praises they sing in a guttural chorus. The crowds assemble again to witness the Perahera, a solemn procession of the sacred elephants which have been arriving all the afternoon from the Buddhist temples of the district, until the court containing the bell-shaped Dagobas which rise round the Temple of the Tooth is full of the noble beasts and their picturesque attendants, who move about bearing green burdens of bamboo and branches of trees for their charges to feed upon. At length, decorated with gorgeous masks and trappings of red, yellow, or white, glittering with gold embroidery representing Buddha in his manifold incarnations, with sacred inscriptions interwoven round every figure, the processional elephants are drawn up in line on either side of the temple gate. As the Archduke and his suite enter the balcony of the octagon, from whence the Kandyan kings were wont to show themselves to their subjects, the magnificent temple elephant descends the long flight of steps in gorgeous state caparisons of scarlet and gold presented by the King of Siam, and bearing the golden shrine of the Sacred Tooth under a golden howdah. A score of attendants walk at the side, supporting a lofty cloth of gold canopy, outlined with lamps and flowers. Snowy plumes rise behind the flapping ears, and turbaned mahouts kneel on the richly-masked head, and lean against the gilt columns of the howdah, holding peacock-feather fans and scarlet umbrellas edged with tinkling golden bells. The temple band leads the way, the barbaric strains of music being accompanied by the clashing cymbals and rattling castanets of a hundred whirling dancers. The dignified Kandyan chiefs walk in glittering ranks before the mighty elephant which occupies the post of honour, his small eyes twinkling through the red and golden mask of the huge head which towers above the multitude, and his enormous tusks guided carefully by the temple servants, to prevent accidental damage from their sweeping ivory curves. The thirty elephants of the procession walk three abreast, ridden by officials in muslin robes and embroidered scarves of sacred red and yellow, and holding golden dishes heaped with rice, cocoa-nut, and flowers, the consecrated offerings of the Buddhist religion. Each trio of elephants is preceded by a band of music, a troupe of dancers, and a crowd of gaudily-clad natives with blazing torches and scarlet banners. Sometimes a baby elephant trots along by his mother's side as a preliminary education in the future duties of

his sacred calling, and seems terrified by the noise and glare, which in no way disconcert the imperturbable dignity of his elders. Round and round the wide area of the temple precincts the gigantic animals move with the slow and stately tread which allows ample time for the wild evolutions of the mazy dances performed before each advancing line. The splendour of the barbaric pageant harmonises with the vivid colouring of native life and landscape. The red glare of a thousand flaming torches flashing back from the gorgeous trappings of the noble elephants, the dark faces of the bounding dancers, the waving fans and floating banners, the wild bursts of savage music, and the Oriental brilliancy of the many-coloured crowd, contrasting with the jewelled costumes of Kandyan chiefs and the yellow robes of the Buddhist priesthood, render the imposing ceremonial a picture of unprecedented splendour. The tropical wealth of vegetation which frames the fantastic procession enhances the dazzling spectacle, before which every memory of European pageantry fades into a cold and colourless dream.

The festivities last far into the night, and the wicks still smoulder in the cocoa-nut shells at sunrise as the Malwatte monastery across the lake echoes the early strains of the temple band. Slanting sunbeams gild the plummy palms of the green islet which studs the calm blue water. A shower has fallen in the night, flushing the hedges of pink and purple lantana and the massive foliage with a tangle of gorgeous flowers. Golden allamanda climbs in wild profusion over bush and tree, mingling a trailing curtain of yellow blossoms with the glowing boughs of scarlet hibiscus and the long sprays of lilac thunbergia which festoon the overarching branches. Passion flower ropes the palms and flings the sweeping tendrils of its white and crimson garlands on the green banks of the lake. Arum lilies choke each shallow brook, and huge crotons fill every ditch with a riot of colour, the velvety leaves of rose and crimson, chocolate and purple, spotted and barred with white. Green spears, which shoot up in bristling masses from mossy banks, are starred with scarlet. Orange cacti twist blue-green spikes and writhing stems in wild contortions; the pink flowers of the sensitive plant carpet the turf, and the vast green garden of equatorial nature exhales the fragrant atmosphere of a crowded hothouse.

The long streets and low white dwellings of Kandy, with feathery cocoa-nuts rising above red eaves and bamboo thatch,

extend in curious perspective beyond the lake, and a rift in the forest reveals a chain of dark-blue mountains piercing the roseate morning sky. The Malwatte monastery beneath us nestles in embowering woods, the monastic cells surrounding a quadrangle shaded by the spreading boughs of a quivering peepul tree. Descending the hill on a journey of discovery, we are invited by a young monk, engaged in teaching some boys the Buddhist Scriptures, to enter his little sanctum, furnished, like the prophet's chamber on the wall, with bed, stool, and candlestick, supplemented by English influences with a petroleum lamp, a photograph of the superior in an Oxford frame, and a tiny table. The chapel of the community contains nothing of interest but the usual image of Buddha, and two curiously carved seats from whence '*Bana*,' or doctrine, is preached at stated seasons. The Monastery of Asgyriya, buried in another wood behind the town, shares the importance of Malwatte, every Buddhist priest of Ceylon being ordained in one or other of these historic sanctuaries. The stillness of the woodland cloister suggests an earthly counterpart of Nirvana; for when the great Indian mystic

wended unto the tree

Beneath whose boughs it was ordained that truth should come,

the prophetic voice which spoke to him through whispering leaves and sighing breeze, according to popular belief, for ever consecrated the solemn forests to the mysteries of religion. The Asgyriya temple contains a colossal Buddha, eighteen cubits long, carved in the solid rock which forms the further side of the sacred building. An inscription at the back, in the Pali character, is a legal conveyance of certain lands to the temple priesthood. The neighbouring village of Lewella possesses another forest sanctuary, with a huge red image and an historic Daghoba, or shrine, built over sacred relics on the rocky plateau which projects from the main edifice.

The environing scenery is divinely beautiful. Lovely walks, named after the wives of succeeding Governors, penetrate the tropical woods and skirt the green hillsides. The purple gorges which cleave the sunlit mountains, and the various reaches of the enchanting Mahaveli-Ganga, the 'great sandy river' of Ceylon, afford exquisite glimpses of untrammelled nature, which attains an ideal beauty at Gonawatta Ferry. A forest road overhung by palm and banana winds round a range of cliffs high above the swiftly flowing water, reached by a gradual descent into verdant

valleys carpeted with emerald rice, and fringed with green plumes of palm, varied by blue blossoms of cinchona and glossy boughs of cacao, with long brown pods hiding among the polished leaves. For seven miles we follow the river's course through the tropic wilderness. Two Tamil children sit on the wide green leaves of a tall india-rubber plant at the roadside, and Cingalese girls in plaid skirts and muslin bodices cross the ferry to a coffee plantation on the opposite hill. Rustling leaves suggest an unseen snake; but though the deadly cobra hides in every jungle, and the still more terrible tic-polonga haunts the crevices of crumbling walls, the fatal foe is rarely seen by those who keep to the beaten tracks, though a tree recently cut down in the gardens of Government House disclosed a nest of cobras among the branching roots, proving the reality of the peril so frequently forgotten. The palm-thatched villages under the clustering cocoa-nuts repay many exploring tours into the green depths of forest and valley, with picturesque glimpses of rural life under novel aspects, and the Botanical Gardens of Peradenia, three miles from Kandy, add to the splendour of unrivalled vegetation the further charm of the fresh experiences with which they provide us.

Amid these tropical groves we revel in the strange delight of breaking the ripe nutmeg from the external shell of scarlet mace, gathering fragrant buds of clove or brown seeds of pungent allspice, and plucking glossy boughs of cinnamon in order to taste the rough bark and bruise the aromatic leaves into double sweetness. We stand beneath the deadly upas tree, where certain death awaits the unwary sleeper beneath its menacing shadow, and even the dreaded cobra is not exempt from the fatal effects of a more deadly poison than his own. A noble aisle of towering cabbage palms soars upward in unbroken smoothness, the bright green 'cabbage' forming the capital of every column and dividing sombre plumes from silvery stems. The Mahaveli-Ganga bounds one side of the great gardens, and a graceful satinwood bridge spans the stream flowing between thickets of bamboo, which mirror their fluffy foliage and white or golden stems in the transparent water. In the teeming soil of Peradenia these gigantic bamboos shoot up at the rate of a foot in twenty-four hours, and only begin to die down when they attain their normal height of a hundred feet. The tropical wonders of Brazilian forests and South Sea isles grow with native luxuriance in their adopted land, the white flowers of the tall Liberian coffee scent the air, and the orchids of the Amazon festoon unknown trees with brilliant blossoms which

mimic bird and butterfly. The traveller's palm, so called from the draught of water obtained by incision of the stem, shades the turf with mighty fans. A single leaf is supplied to every native soldier as a tent, and some of the fronds are large enough to shelter fifteen men. The green lane which leads from the pretty village of Peradenia to the little station glows with the radiant exotics which drape the hedgerows. An advancing Buddhist priest makes a point of vivid colour against the red earth and rich vegetation, hiding his face with his palm-leaf fan, and guarding his yellow robe from contact with a woman's dress, in obedience to the rule of his Order. No lover of flowers could leave the wealth of gorgeous blossoms untouched, but rapidity of decay equals luxuriance of growth in a tropic clime, and our fragrant burden is only gathered to be cast away.

A large tea estate flanks the station, the green shrubs bordering the line. A visit to the tea factory occupies a spare half-hour, and we witness the process of drying, sifting, and rolling the tea, which impregnates the air with an overpowering odour. Each of the four upper leaves on every newly 'flushed' spray is used for a different kind of tea, the topmost shoot, known as 'broken Pekoe,' being the most costly and delicate of all; the fragrant 'orange Pekoe' is made from the *uncurling* leaf beneath. The small *open* leaf next in order is the less expensive 'Pekoe,' and the *large* leaf of the tiny twig makes the coarse and common 'Pekoe Souchong.' The frequent showers of the verdant island 'flush' the tea about every fortnight, when the whole strength of the plantation turns out to pick the fresh shoots. Having improved our theoretical knowledge, we return to put it into practice and enjoy the cheering cup in the verandah of the hotel, where local merchants preside over bales of embroidery and glittering stores of filagree. The lake reflects a brilliant sunset, and the tall palms stand out in black silhouette against the orange glow of the evening sky. Our stay in Kandy draws to a close, but the spell of enchantment remains unbroken.

The precious gem glows with richer colour and brighter lustre the longer we gaze into its crystal depths, and increasing familiarity with the wonders of tropical scenery deepens their ineffaceable impression and alluring charm. The fair face of nature reveals a thousand unimagined beauties to those whose admiration has ripened into love, and the fetters which bind the heart to this garden of Paradise are hard to break, although the outward eye sees only a chain of flowers.

THE SURGEON'S GUEST.

CHAPTER. III.

THE walk which aroused so much indignation in Edgar Woolley's breast had been one of more than common interest, as possibly something in the faces of the returning couple assured him. There is a point in the journey towards intimacy at which one or other of the converging pair turns the conversation inwards, disclosing his or her hopes, fears, ambitions. Pleasance in the purest innocence had reached this stage to-day, arriving at it by the road of that silence which is only tolerable when some progress towards friendship has already been made, and which even then presently invites attack. The tall gentleman, having lopped and picked at her bidding, and having gathered up the last scraps of the hawthorn which he had ruthlessly broken from the tree, turned to find his companion gazing into distance with a shadow on her face. 'Your thoughts are not very pleasant ones, I fear,' he said, half lightly, half seriously. 'A penny were too much for them.'

'I was thinking of Mr. Woolley,' she answered simply.

'Indeed!' he said, surprised. He was more surprised when she poured out of a full heart the story of her father's debt to his assistant, and of the mortgage on the old house which the Partridges had held for generations, and which was to her father as the apple of his eye. Of course no word fell from her of Woolley's position in regard to herself. But the voice has subtle inflections, and men's apprehensions are quick where they are interested—and he was interested here. Her story left little untold which he could not conjecture.

'I am very sorry to hear this,' he said musingly, after a pause. 'But money troubles—after all, money troubles are not the worst kind of troubles.' He raised his hat and walked for a moment bareheaded.

'But this is not a mere money trouble,' she answered warmly. She was wrapped up in her own distresses, and could not perceive at the moment that he had reverted to his. 'We shall lose *that*.'

They had reached the crown of the hill, and as she spoke she pointed to the Old Hall lying below them, its many gables, and

stone front, and mullioned windows warmed into beauty by lichens and sunlight. 'We shall lose that!' she repeated, pointing to it.

'Yes!' the stranger said, with a quick glance at her. 'I understand, and I do not wonder it grieves you. It has been your home always, I suppose?' She nodded. 'And your father thinks it must go?' he continued, after a short pause given to deep thought, as it seemed.

'He thinks so.'

'Something should be done!' he replied, in a tone of decision which surprised her. 'I conclude from what you say that Mr. Woolley is pressing for his money?'

She nodded again. Her eyes were full of tears, which the sight of the house had brought to them, and she could not trust herself to speak. His sympathy seemed natural to her, so that she saw nothing at this minute strange in his position. She forgot that only a few days or weeks earlier he had been in the blackness of despair himself. He talked now as though he could help others!

They were close to the house, and he had asked the history of the mouldering shield over the doorway, and she was telling the story when she checked herself suddenly and stood still. Edgar Woolley had emerged, and was standing before them with a flush of stealthy triumph on his cheek. The tall gentleman could scarcely be in doubt who he was; nor could Woolley well take Pleasance's involuntary cry for a sign of gladness, though he strove to force the smile which was habitual to him.

'Miss Pleasance,' he said, 'would you kindly step inside? Your father is asking for you.'

'Where is he?' she asked, not moving. He had used no form of greeting, neither did she. Something—perhaps not the same thing in each—was at work from the first moment, kindling the one against the other.

'He is in the hall,' he answered, chafing at her delay.

She turned to her companion. 'I will take your flowers in, please,' she said. She held out her hands as she spoke, and he laid the pile gently in them, Woolley looking on the while. The latter's gaze was bent chiefly on her, and he did not see what she saw—that some strong emotion was working in the tall gentleman's face. He had turned a livid white, his nostrils were twitching, and a little pulse in his cheek was beating wildly.

She changed her mind abruptly. 'No, do you take them in,'

she said to him. 'Will you take them in, please?' she added peremptorily; and she pushed back the hawthorn into his arms, and held out her basket. The stranger took the things with reluctance, as it seemed, but without demur, and went into the house.

'Now,' she said, turning rapidly upon Woolley, 'what do you want?'

'My answer!' he retorted, with equal fierceness.

A second before he had not intended to say that. He had purposed carrying the war into the stranger's country. But his temper mastered him for just a second, and he found himself staking all, when he had planned only an affair of outposts. 'Wait, Miss Pleasance,' he added desperately, seeing in a moment what he had done, and that he had committed himself. 'I beg you not to give it me without thought—without thought of others, of me and of your father, as well as of yourself! Do not judge me hastily! Do not judge me,' he continued passionately, for her face was icy, 'by myself as I am now, Pleasance, wild with love of you, but——'

'By what then, Mr. Woolley?' she said, her lip curling. 'By what am I to judge you if not by yourself?'

'By——'

'Well?' she said mercilessly. He had halted. He could not find words. In truth, he had made a great mistake. If he had ever had a chance of winning her his chance was gone now; and, recognising this, he let his fury grow to such a pitch that he could not wait for the answer he had requested. He was mad with love of her, with rage at his own mistake, with shame at being so outgeneralled. 'I will tell you, Miss Partridge!' he cried hoarsely, his eyes sparkling with passion: 'Judge me by the future! That fellow who was with you, do you know who he is? Do you know that I can have him in gaol any day?—ay, in gaol!'

'What has he done?' she said sternly. 'Tell me.'

It was a pity he could not say, 'He is a thief—a forger—a swindler!' The charge he could bring against the stranger was heavy enough, and yet he found it difficult to word it so that it should seem heavy. 'You thought he was shot?' he said at last. 'Bah! he shot himself.'

'I know it,' she answered, without the movement of a muscle.

He stared at her. How was it? he wondered. Before his

holiday he had been the Old Hall's master. He had wound the poor doctor round his finger, and Pleasance had at any rate been civil to him. Now, it seemed, all this was altered. And why? 'Ah, well! He shall go to gaol, d—n him!' he said, putting his conclusion into words. 'He shall go to gaol! and if you have a fancy for him you must go there too!'

She lost her self-possession at the insult, and her face turned scarlet. 'You coward!' she said, with fierce scorn. 'You would not dare to say to his face what you have to say against him. Let me pass!'

She swept into the house and left him standing there in the sunlight. As she hurried through the hall, which to her coming suddenly into it seemed dusky, she caught a glimpse of the tall gentleman leaning over the bureau with his back to her. Had he heard? The door was open, and so was one window. She could not be sure, but the suspicion was enough. Her face was on fire as she ran up the stairs. How she hated, oh, how she hated that wretch out there! She thought that she had never known before what it was to hate.

For there was something in what he had said. There lay the sharp sting. How had she come to be so intimate with one who had done what the tall gentleman had done? She tried to trace the stages, but she could not. Then she tried to think of him with some of the horror, some of the distaste which she had felt when he had lain ghastly and blood-stained behind the closed door. But she could not. The face we have known a year can never again put on for us the look it wore when first we saw it. The hand of time does not move backward. Pleasance found this was so, and even in the solitude of her own room hid her face and trembled. Could anything but evil come of such a—a friendship?

Meanwhile Woolley's state of mind was even less enviable. His way in the world had been made hitherto by the exercise of tact and self-control, and he valued himself upon the possession of those qualities accordingly. He could not understand how they had come to fail him at this pinch, or why the advantage he had so far enjoyed had deserted him now. Yet the secret was not far to seek. He was jealous, and when jealousy attacks him, the man who lives by playing on the passions of others falls at once to the common level. Jealousy undermines his judgment as certainly and fatally as passion deprives the fencer of his skill.

Though Woolley did not allow that this was the cause of his

defeat, he knew that for the moment he could not command himself, and before seeking the doctor he took a turn as far as the gate to collect his thoughts and arrange his plan of vengeance. When he returned to the house he found the hall empty. He passed through it and down a short passage to a small room at the back, which Doctor Partridge occasionally used—especially in times of trouble, when bills poured in and he meditated a fresh loan—as a kind of sanctum. Woolley rapped at the door.

To his surprise no answering 'Come in!' followed his knock, but some one rising hastily from his chair came to the door and opened it to the extent of a few inches. It was the doctor. He squeezed himself through. His face seemed agitated—but then the passage was ill lit, even on a summer afternoon—his manner nervous. 'You want to see me, my dear fellow?' he said, holding the door close behind him and speaking effusively. 'Do you mind coming back in a quarter of an hour or so? I am—I shall be quite disengaged then.'

'I would prefer,' said Woolley doggedly, 'to see you now.'

'Wait ten minutes, and you shall,' the doctor replied, taking him by the button with his disengaged hand, as though he would bespeak his confidence. 'Just at this moment, my dear fellow—excuse me!'

There was an odd ring in the doctor's voice—a ring half wheedling, half hostile. But Woolley concluded that Pleasance was with him—making a complaint in all probability; and this in a measure satisfied him. He thought he could still depend on the doctor. With a sulky nod he gave way and returned to the lawn, and there paced up and down prodding the daisies with his stick. Things had gone badly with him—very badly. So much the worse for some one.

When he went in again he found the doctor alone in the dingy little room, into which one plumped down two steps, so that it was very like a well. 'Come in, come in,' the elder man said fussily. 'What is it, Woolley? What can I do for you?' As he spoke his hands were busy with the papers on the table, and it was noticeable that after one swift glance, which he shot at his assistant's face on his first entrance, he avoided looking at him. 'What is it?'

'First,' Woolley rejoined with acidity, 'I would like to know whether you propose to keep that fellow any longer in your house as a companion for your daughter?'

'The tall gentleman?'

'Precisely,' with great dryness.

'He is gone!' was the unexpected answer. 'He is gone already. If you doubt me, my dear fellow,' the doctor added hastily, 'ask the servants—ask Daniel.'

'Gone, is he?' Woolley said, gloomily considering the statement.

'Yes, he quite saw the propriety of it,' the doctor continued. 'He gave me no trouble.'

'And paid you no fees, I suppose?'

'Well, no, he did not.'

'Then now to my second question, sir,' Woolley went on, tapping with his fingers on the table. But try as he might, he could not quite rise to the old cool level of superiority, he could not drive the flush from his cheek or still his pulse. 'What is your daughter's answer? From something which has just passed between us I conclude it to be unfavourable to me.'

'Indeed?' the doctor said, looking at him blankly.

'But, favourable or unfavourable,' Woolley continued rudely, 'I must have it betimes. You bade me go away and give her a month to think over it. I have done so, and I am back. Now I ask, What is her answer?'

'Well,' said the doctor, rubbing his hands in great perplexity, 'I have not—I am not quite sure that I am prepared to say. You must give me a little more time—indeed you must. Let us say until the day after to-morrow. I will sound her and give you a decisive answer then—after breakfast, and here if you like.'

The suitor restrained himself. He would have liked to reject the proposal. But he did love her in his way, and at the sound of her father's wavering, uncertain utterance hope began to tell its flattering tale. 'Very well!' he said. 'But you quite understand,' he continued, with moody fierceness, his manner curiously made up of shame and defiance, 'the alternative, sir? If I am not to be allied to you, it will no longer suit me to have my money laid up here, and I must have it—the sooner the better.'

'Well, well,' said the poor doctor testily, 'we will talk about that, Woolley, when the time comes.'

There seemed to be nothing more to be said. Yet Woolley still lingered by the table, fingering the things on it without looking up. Perhaps an impulse to withdraw his threat and end the interview more kindly was working in him. If so, however,

he crushed it down, and presently took himself out. When his step ceased to sound in the passage the poor doctor drew a deep sigh of relief.

We said before that passengers along the moorland road which passes near the Old Hall—a road once much frequented but now little travelled, save by tramps—that passengers along it see nothing of the house. The house lies below the surface. In like manner a visitor arriving at the Old Hall itself during the next thirty-six hours would have observed nothing strange, though there was so much below the surface. The assistant contrived to be out at his work during the greater part of the intervening day. He judged rightly that love-making would help him little now. The doctor rubbed his hands and talked fast to preserve appearances, and Pleasance as well as her suitor seemed to have repented of their joint outbreak. She was civil to him, if somewhat cold. So that when he knocked at the door of the little room—after a sleepless night in which he had well bethought himself how he should act at the coming interview—he had some hopes. He was feeling almost amiable.

The doctor was sitting behind his table, Pleasance on a chair in the one small window recess. With three people in it the room looked more like a well than ever. With three people? Nay, with four, to speak correctly. Woolley shut the door behind him very softly and set his teeth together. For behind the doctor was standing the tall gentleman.

The assistant smiled viciously. He was not prepared for this, but his nerves were strung to-day. 'A trick? Very well,' he said, looking from one to another. 'I understand and know what to do. I can guess now what my answer is to be, doctor, and need scarcely say to hear it. Shall I go?'

'No! no!' the doctor answered hurriedly. He was much distressed and perturbed, perhaps by the menace which underlay the other's last words. As for the tall gentleman, he gazed gravely and sternly over his beard, while Pleasance looked through the window, her face hot. 'No, no, I have something to say which affects you. And this gentleman here——'

'Has he anything to say?' the assistant retorted, eyeing his antagonist contemptuously. 'Because I should like to hear it before I take out a warrant against him for attempting to commit suicide. It is punishable with a very considerable imprisonment, my friend!'

'I am no friend of yours,' was the stranger's reply, given very gravely. 'You do not know me, Edgar Woolley.'

The latter started at being so addressed. Moreover, it was the first time he had heard the tall gentleman's voice, and for a breathing space, while the two looked on one another, he seemed to be racking his memory. But he got no result, and he answered with a bitter laugh, 'No, I do not know you. Nor you me—yet!'

'Yes, I do,' was the stern, the unexpected answer. 'Too well!'

'Bah!' exclaimed Woolley fiercely, though it was evident that he was ill at ease. 'Let us have an end of these heroics! If you have anything to say, say it.'

'I will,' the tall gentleman answered. He was still grave and quiet, but there was a glitter in his eyes. 'I have already indicated to Dr. Partridge what my story is, but now I must ask him to hear it more at length. 'Many years ago there was a young man, almost a boy, employed in the offices of a great firm at Liverpool—a boy poor, very poor, but of a good and old family.'

Woolley's smile of derision became on a sudden fixed, so to speak. But he did not interrupt, and the other after a pause went on. 'This lad made the acquaintance of a medical student a little older than himself, and was presently led by him—I think he was weak and sensitive and easily led—into gambling. He lost more than he could pay. His mother was a widow, and she was very poor. To have paid the sum, small as it was, would have ruined her.'

The stranger paused again, overcome, it seemed, by painful recollections. There was a slight flush on Woolley's brow. The girl sitting in the window, her hands clasped on her knees, turned so as to see more of the room. 'Now listen,' the speaker continued softly, 'to what happened. One day this clerk's friend, to whom the greater part of the money was due, came to the office at the luncheon hour and pressed him to pay. The other clerks were out. The two were alone together, and while they were so alone there came in a client of the firm to pay some money—40*l*. The lad took the money and gave a receipt. He had power to do so. The man left again abruptly, after telling them that he was starting to South America that evening. Well, when he was gone'—here his voice sank a little—'the friend made a suggestion. I think you will guess what it was.'

No one spoke.

'He suggested to the clerk to take this money and pay his debts with it—to steal it, in fact. And the boy—he resisted for a time, but in the end, still telling himself he did not intend to steal it, he put it away in his desk and locked it up, and gave in no account of it. After that the issue was certain. A day came when, the other still pressing him and tempting him, he took the money and used it, and became a thief.'

The silence in the little room was deep indeed. On Woolley a spell seemed to have fallen. He would have interrupted the man, but he could not.

'Almost immediately after this,' the speaker continued, 'those two parted. And within a week—God's ways are not our ways—strange news reached this young clerk. Three distant kinsmen whom he had never seen had died within three months, and the last of them had willed to him a great property. The name and the honour—for the first time the tall gentleman's voice faltered—'of a great family had fallen upon his shoulders to wear and to uphold! And he was a thief!'

'*You*,' he went on—and from this point he directly addressed the man who gazed spellbound at him from beyond the table—'*you* cannot enter into his feelings, nor understand them! It were folly to tell *you* that the remembrance that he had stained that honour and disgraced that name embittered, poisoned his whole life. *You* would say that the stain was unknown and unsuspected. So it was, but that was no comfort to him. He made restitution tenfold, but he found no comfort in that. He tried—God knows he did—to make amends by a life of honour and integrity, and while his mother lived he led that life. But he found no comfort in it. She died, and he lived on alone in the old house of his family, and it may be'—again his voice shook—'that he brooded overmuch on this matter, and came to take too morbid a view of it, to let it stand always between him and the sun.' He stopped suddenly, and looked uncertainly about him.

'Yes, yes!' the doctor said. Pleasance had turned again to the window, and was weeping softly. 'He did, he did!'

'At any rate he formed a resolution. You can guess what that was. It was a wild, mad, perhaps a wicked resolution. But such as it was—an ancestor in sterner times, writing in a book which this man possessed, had said, "Blood washes out shame!"—

such as it was he made it, and Heaven used it for its own purpose, and frustrated it in its own time. The lad, now a man, following blind chance, as he thought, was led to within a mile of this house—this one lonely house, of all others in England, in which you live. But it was not chance which led him, but Heaven's own guiding, to the end that his, Valentine Walton's life, might be spared, and that you might be punished.'

Woolley struggled to reply. But the thought which the other's last words expressed was in his mind too, and held him dumb. How had Walton been led to this house of all houses? Why had this almost forgotten sin risen up now? He stood a moment speechless, glaring at Walton; aware, bitterly aware, of what the listeners were thinking, and yet unable to say a word in his defence. Then with an effort he became himself again.

'Well, that is your version, is it?' he said, with a hard, jeering laugh which failed to hide the effect the story had produced upon him. 'You say you are a thief? It is not worth my while to contradict you. And now, if you please, we will descend from play-acting to business. You have been very kind in arranging this little scene, Dr. Partridge, and I am greatly obliged to you. I need only say that I shall take care to repay you fully, and to the last penny.'

'First,' the doctor said mildly, yet with some dignity, 'I should repay you what I owe you—if you really want your money now, that is.'

'Want it? Of course I do!' was the fierce rejoinder. The man's nature was recovering from the shock, and in the rebound passion was getting the upper hand.

'Very well,' said the doctor firmly. 'Then here it is.' He pushed aside a paper, and disclosed a small packet of notes and a little pile of gold and silver. 'You will find the amount on that piece of paper, and it includes your salary for the next quarter in lieu of notice. When you have seen that it is correct I shall be glad to have your receipt, and we will close our connection.'

The trapped man had one wish—to see them dead before him. But wishes go for little, and in his bitter rage and chagrin he clung to a shred of pride. He would not own that he had been outgeneralled. He sat down and wrote the quittance. The first pen—it was a quill—would not write. He jobbed it violently on the table, and flung it with an oath into the fireplace. But the next served him.

'You have lent this money, I suppose,' he said, looking at Walton as he rose. 'More fool you! You will never be repaid.'

He did not turn at all to Pleasance or look at her. He had come into the room hoping still to win her. He went out—a stranger. Not even their eyes had met. He had lost her, and revenge, and everything, save his money.

CHAPTER IV.

WITHIN, a bedroom, littered and dismantled, a pile of luggage stacked in the middle of the floor. Without, a grey cloudy sky, such as we sometimes have in June, and a nipping east wind blowing roughly; a wind almost visible to the man gnawing his nails at the window, and looking out moodily. He found no comfort within or without, in the past or the future. Behind him he had only a retrospect of humiliation, of vain hopes and ambitions to turn to; before him no prospect but that dreary one of starting afresh in a new place among new people, unfriended, save by three thousand and odd pounds. It had come to this.

'D——n him!' he whispered between his clenched teeth. It was no formal expletive. He meant it—every letter of it.

By and by he turned wearily from the window, and his eyes fell on a little article lying on the dressing-table. It was almost the only thing, save a stout walking-stick, which he had not packed up. It was a pistol. He had lit on it the day before in a dark nook behind the medicine bottles in the surgery, and finding it in good condition, with one barrel of the two undischarged, he had had no difficulty in conjecturing whose it was and how it came there. No doubt it was Walton's, the pistol with which he had shot himself—as indeed it was. Nickson had brought it to the doctor, and the latter with very natural distaste had thrust it into the first out-of-the-way place which lay ready to his hand.

This little piece of evidence Woolley presently put in his pocket, and taking his stick left the room; leaving it, as he knew, for good and all, and not without a last bitter glance round the place where he had slept, and schemed, and hoped for two years. He went down the stairs, and through the house to the back door, seeing no one except Daniel, who was rubbing down the mare in the yard. To the surgeon's fancy the house, as he passed through, seemed abnormally still, as if in the hush and silence which often

fall upon a house in the afternoon it were awaiting and expecting something—as if it were aware that something strange was in the air, and all the stones were saying ‘Hist!’

Shaking off this feeling with an oath, the surgeon took a back path through the shrubbery, which led into the main drive near the white gate. From that point the track mounted between the bracken-covered slopes of the ravine until it emerged on the crown of the moor. In one place both path and glen turned at a considerable angle, and Woolley had just reached this corner when he happened to lift his eyes, and stopped short with a low exclamation. In front of him, strolling slowly along in the same direction as himself, with his hands behind him and his eyes on the path, was the tall gentleman—Walton.

‘Ah!’ Woolley whispered viciously to himself, hating the other the more for falling in his way now, ‘the devil take you for a mooning lunatic! I would like to give you in charge here, and this minute, and swear you were going to do it again!’

He laughed grimly at this, his first thought—a natural thought enough, since his intention at starting had been to swear an information against Walton, and get him locked up if possible; at any rate, to cause him as much vexation as might be. But that first natural thought led to another which suddenly drove the blood from his cheek and kindled an unholy fire in his eyes. That revenge was a poor one. But was there not another within his grasp? What if Walton were found there lying on the path shot and dead, his own pistol beside him?

Ah! what then? What would people say? Would they not say—would not Nickson be ready to swear that the madman had done it again, and with more thoroughness? Woolley’s hand closed convulsively on the butt of the weapon in his pocket. One barrel of it was still loaded. No one had seen him take it. No one knew that he knew of its existence. Must not even the doctor conclude that Walton had repossessed himself of it, and in some temporary return of his moody aberration had used it—this time with fatal effect?

The perspiration sprang out on the tempted man’s brow. Though the wind was blowing keenly, and a wrack of white clouds was sweeping over his head, the glen seemed to grow on a sudden close and confined, roofed in with a leaden sky. ‘It is a devil’s thought!’ he muttered, his eyes on the figure before him, ‘a devil’s thought!’ At that moment there could be no question

with him of the existence of a devil. He felt him at his elbow tempting him, promising revenge and impunity.

'No, no! Not that!' He rather gasped the words than said them, yet gasped them aloud, the more thoroughly to convince himself that he did reject the idea. 'Not that!'

No, not that. Yet he began to walk on at a pace which must rapidly bring him up with the other. His brain too dwelt on the ease and safety with which he might have carried out the scheme. He remembered that before turning the corner he had looked back and seen no one. Therefore for some minutes he was secure from interruption from behind. All round the ravine he could command the sky-line. There was no one visible. He and Walton were alone. And he was overtaking Walton.

The latter heard him coming up, and turned and stopped. He showed no surprise on discovering who his follower was, but spoke as if he had eyes in his back, and had watched him drawing gradually nearer. 'I have been waiting for you, Woolley,' he said. 'I thought I should meet you.'

'Did you?' said Woolley softly, eyeing him in a curious fashion, and himself very pale.

'Yes, I wanted to say this to you.' There the tall gentleman paused and looked down, prodding the turf with his stick. He seemed to find some difficulty in going on. 'It is this,' he continued at last: 'I have done you a mischief here, acting honestly, and doing only what seemed to me to be right too. But I have harmed you—that is the fact—and I am anxious to know that you will not leave here a hardened man—a worse man than I found you.'

'Thank you,' the other said. His lips were dry, and he moistened them with his tongue. But he did not take his eyes from Walton's face.

'If you will let me know,' the tall gentleman continued haltingly—he was still intent upon the ground—'what your plans are, I will see if I can further them. Until lately I thought you had spoiled my whole life, and I bore you malice for it. I would have done you what harm I could. Now——'

'Yes?'

'I think—I trust it may not be so. I have dwelt, I fear, too much on that old affair. I hope to begin a new life now.'

'With her?'

The tall gentleman looked up swiftly, as if the other had

struck him. There was menace in the tone and the words, and menace more dreadful in the white face and gleaming eyes he found confronting him. 'You fool!' Woolley hissed—passion in the deadly calmness of his voice—and he took a step nearer to the other. 'You fool, to come and tell me this!—to come and taunt me! *You* help me! *You* pardon me! *You* will not leave me worse than you found me! Ay, but you will! Dolt! fool! idiot!' His voice rose. A wicked smile flickered on his lips. His eyes still dwelling on the other's face, he drew the pistol slowly from his pocket and levelled it at Walton's head. 'You will, for I—am going—to kill you.'

Walton heard the click of the hammer as it rose. For a second, during which his tongue refused obedience, he tasted of the bitterness of the cup which he had before held to his own lips. It flashed across him, as his heart gave a great bound and stood still, that this was his punishment. Then he recovered himself.

'Not before that child!' he said scornfully. He forced his eyes to quit the dark muzzle which threatened him and to glance aside.

There was no one there, but Woolley turned involuntarily to look, and in an instant Walton sprang upon him, and, knocking up the pistol with his stick, closed with him. The one loaded barrel exploded in the air, and the men went writhing and stumbling to and fro, Woolley striking savagely at the other's face with the muzzle of the pistol. The taller man contented himself with parrying these attacks, while he clutched Woolley's left wrist with his disengaged hand.

Presently they were down in a heap together. When they rose and drew apart, breathless and dishevelled, there remained unnoticed on the ground between them a tiny white object—a small oblong packet about the size of a letter. It was very light, for in the twinkling of an eye the wind had turned it over and over, and carried it three or four paces away.

'You villain!' Walton gasped, trembling with excitement. His nerves were shaken as much by the narrowness of his escape as by the struggle. 'You would have murdered me!'

'I would!' the other said, with vengeful emphasis, and the two men stood a moment glaring at one another. Meanwhile the wind, toying with the little white packet, rolled it slowly along the path; then, getting under it at a place where a break in the ridge produced an eddy, it began to hoist it merrily up the slope.

At this point Walton's eye, straying for a second from his opponent, lit upon it.

Just then Woolley spoke. 'You have had a lucky escape!' he said, with a reckless gesture, half menace, half farewell. 'Good-bye! Don't come across my path again, or you may fail to come off so easily. And don't—don't, you fool!' he added, returning in a fresh fit of anger when he had already turned his back, 'pat a man on the head when you have got him down, or he will——'

He stopped short, his hand at his breast pocket. For a moment, while his face underwent a marvellous change, he searched frantically in the pocket, in other pockets. 'My notes!' he panted. 'They were here! Where are they?' Then a dreadful expression of rage and suspicion distorted his features, and he advanced on Walton, his hands outstretched. 'What have you done with them?' he cried, scarcely able to articulate. 'Where are they?'

'There!' said the other sternly. He pointed past the furious man to a little space of clear turf half-way up the slope. On this the white packet could be seen fluttering gently over and over. 'There! But if you are not pretty quick, you villain, you will pay a heavy price for this business!'

With an oath Woolley turned and started up the hill, the tall man watching his exertions with a certain grim satisfaction. The pursuer speedily overtook the notes, but to gain possession of them was a different matter. Three times he stooped to clutch them, and three times a mischievous gust swept them away. Then he tripped and fell, and his hat tumbled off, and his oaths flew more freely on the breeze.

Altogether it was not a dignified retreat, but it was a very characteristic one. The last time Walton got a glimpse of him, just on the crown of the hill, he was still running, bent double with his face to the ground, and his hand outstretched. He never saw him again.

Walton, getting back to the house unnoticed, said nothing for the moment of what had happened. But at night before he went to bed he told the doctor. 'He ought to go to prison!' the latter said sternly. He was shocked beyond measure.

'So ought I,' said Walton, 'if it is to come to prisons.'

'Pish!'

A little word, but it cheered the tall gentleman, who, notwithstanding his escape, stood somewhat in need of cheering this evening. He had not seen Pleasance since she had escaped from

the room after hearing his explanation. She might have taken his story in many different ways, and he was anxious to know in what way she had taken it. But all day she had not appeared downstairs. Even at dinner the doctor had apologised for her absence. 'She is not very well,' he had said. 'She was a little upset this morning.' And of course the tall gentleman had accepted the excuse with a heavy heart, and presaging the worst.

But dressing next morning he caught sight of Pleasance through his window. She was walking with her father on the lawn—talking to him earnestly, as Walton could see. Apparently she was urging him to some course of action, and the doctor, with his hands under his coat-tails, was assenting with no very good grace.

When Walton descended, however, they were already seated at breakfast, and nothing was said during the meal either of this prelude or of what was chiefly on their minds. But presently, when the doctor rose, it seemed he had something to say. It was something apparently which it went against the grain to say, for he walked to the door—they were breakfasting in the hall, and it stood open—and looked out as if he were more than half inclined for flight. But he returned suddenly, and sat down with a bump.

'Mr. Walton,' he said, his florid face more florid than ever, 'I think there is something I ought to tell you. I do not think that I can—I do not see how I can repay you the money you have advanced. And the place is not worth it. What am I to do?'

'Do?' said the other, looking up sharply. 'Take another cup of tea as I am doing, and think no more about it.'

'That is impossible,' said Pleasance impulsively. She turned very red the next instant, under the tall gentleman's eyes. She had not meant to interfere.

'Indeed!' he said, rising from his chair. 'Then please listen to me. There came to a certain house a man who had been a thief.'

'No!' she said firmly.

'A man hopeless and despairing.'

'No!'

'Alas! yes,' he answered, shaking his head soberly. 'These are facts.'

'No, no, no!' she cried. There were tears in her eyes. 'I do not want to hear. I care nothing for facts!' she exclaimed breathlessly.

'You will not hear me?'

'No!'

Something in her indignant face, her voice, the pose of her figure told him the truth then. 'If you will not listen to me,' he said, leaning with both hands on the table, and speaking in a voice scarcely audible to the doctor, 'I will not say what I was going to propose. If I must be repaid, I must. But you must repay me, Pleasance. Will you?'

The doctor did not wait to hear the answer. He found the open door very convenient. He got away and to horse with a lighter heart than he had carried under his waistcoat for months. He did not feel much doubt about the answer, and indeed all that June morning, which was by good luck as fine as the preceding one had been gloomy, while he rode from house to house with an unprofessional smile on his lips and in his eyes, the two left behind walked up and down the lawn in the sunshine, planning the life which lay before them, and of which every day was to be as cloudless as this day. A hundred times they passed and repassed the old sundial, but it was nothing to them. Lovers count only the hours when the sun does *not* shine.

THE CORNHILL MAGAZINE.

DECEMBER 1893.

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YOU TELL ME, AND I'LL TELL THEE.

Those who have tongues that never lie,
Truth on the lip, truth in the eye,
To Friend or to Foe,
To all above, and to all below;

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